



# LETTERS FROM AN EGYPTIAN TO AN ENGLISH POLITICIAN UPON THE AFFAIRS OF EGYPT

With an Introduction by  
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## INTRODUCTION

WRITTEN in 1905, while Lord Cromer was in command of Egypt, the letters which make up this volume are as much to the point to-day as when penned. As the discerning reader will see, they are the judgments of a travelled and enlightened Egyptian who has carefully compared notes with competent Europeans on the administration of his country as controlled by the British Agency. And it may in some degree disarm British resentment, so easily aroused over the slightest censure of our rule by any member of a subject race, to note that the writer not only pays emphatic tribute to the financial and other reformative work of Lord Cromer, but passes some of his most stringent criticism upon the French system of Law under which Egypt lives, and further argues for such a collaboration of English with native judges as would combine the merits of English judicial methods and standards with native knowledge of Egyptian life and character.

The writer, in short, is no extremist, no vendor of what our imperialistic journals blusterously term sedition, but an intelligent and temperate observer with his wits sharpened by that love of country which Britons bring to bear on their own problems but not upon those of Egypt. And from all who make pretensions to any juster fashion of criticism in national relations than that of the imperialist special pleader, he is entitled to a considerate hearing. The essence of the trouble as between Egyptians and their British rulers is that the latter—

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whether as represented by Anglo-Egyptian administrators, politicians at home, or European journalists in both countries—find an almost insurmountable difficulty in doing as they would be done by. Our Egyptian letter-writer lays his cards on the table. Will his critics do the same ? He avows the material\* gains to his country under the British control, and confesses its backwardness in that political development which is possible only under what we term “ western ” conditions of freedom. But he also insists on the mainly material character of the progress furthered by our control ; on the damning fact of rapid increase in crime alongside of increase in wealth ; and on the lamentable deficit of moral machinery to amend the social and political backwardness. Will the official and other eulogists of the British control face that side of his case as frankly as he faces the strong side of theirs ? Or will they mechanically persist in presenting as a complete vindication of the British rule the fact of a financial prosperity which in no European country would be admitted for a moment to justify conditions of moral and mental stagnation such as prevail in Egypt ? Will they even face the fact that our rule has brought to the Egyptians no systematic sanitary reform ; that not a week passes in Cairo and Alexandria without the fall of a jerry building ; and that the former city is to this day without drainage, as it is without a municipality ?

When interrogated upon those seamy sides of his brilliant administration, Lord Cromer was wont to plead the “ Capitulations ”—the set of more or less inexpedient privileges granted to foreign nations as regards the relations of their subjects in Egypt to the law of the land. The Capitulations are said to

make it impossible to control the building trade in Cairo ; and it appears to follow that when a Government building near the Pyramids collapses before it is out of the contractor's hands, the same mysterious influence is to blame. If this be true, had not our imperialists better draw up a fresh balance sheet, and confess that our rule has failed to secure for Egypt some of the most elementary conditions of good government ? Is it conceivable that a native government could have more completely failed to secure those conditions in the past twenty-five years ?

The sole proposal put forward on the side of the British control by way of securing a decent measure of regulative power to Egypt in these matters of pressing domestic concern is an abortive scheme for setting up foreign legislative bodies which should conserve foreign privileges. As this arrangement would leave a much freer hand than it now possesses to the British control as against the foreign powers, it has naturally not been acceded to. The one ground upon which the Powers can be reasonably asked to surrender their invidious rights would be the establishment of conditions of normal self-government for Egypt, under safeguards which give Britain no advantage over other foreign countries. And this method Lord Cromer has always refused to contemplate. It remains to be seen whether the promised extension of provincial self-government now in hand will grant anything of importance in the right direction.

If it does not, the pretensions of our imperialists as to British achievements in Egypt will remain matter for derision to all who look deeper than the brilliant surface of our administration. It is, after all, no great triumph for a European state at the

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end of the nineteenth century to have made notable advances in the material exploitation of one of the fruitfullest lands on the planet. The Ptolemies did as much in their day; and the Romans did as much after them. Modern science ought as a matter of course to yield corresponding advances; and French engineers before the British planned some of the greatest of recent engineering achievements in Egypt. To have added to these even such important political reforms as the freeing of the peasantry from forced labour and the use of the lash for the extortion of taxes was no more than the plain duty of a control calling itself British. To have failed of that would have been to miss all semblance of moral betterment. And it is the characteristic defect of our imperialist school to miss seeing how idle it is to stand on that modicum of improvement, and ground upon it a permanent claim to Egyptian gratitude. It is as if the British Liberal party of to-day were to claim popular gratitude and votes on the score of the Liberal reforms of the past, without a programme for the present and the future.

Egyptians have their aspirations like Europeans, and by means of their native press they are awake to the vast stir and movement of the modern world. They know the achievement of Japan; and they know how presumptuous was the folly of those Europeans who predicted, in the immemorial way of the western wiseacre, that Japan would never do what Japan has done.

Doubtless they run a risk of over-estimating the rate at which they themselves can progress from their recent and present conditions of autocracy and tutelage to one of constitutional self-government. It was the error—natural to youth—of the

late Mustafa Kamel Pasha to miscalculate the possibilities and overrate the readiness of his people for a full-grown parliamentary system. But if our imperialists and Anglo-Egyptians in general had any capacity for generous sympathy with the aspirations of aliens, any concern for the development of that national self-respect which they themselves professed to desire to see growing in Egypt, they would have welcomed the advent of the "agitator" as a symptom of new life.

Our letter-writer, it will be observed, makes no such mistake. He perfectly recognizes that for the present the British control must manage the national debt and the army—though he notes how egotistic is our handling of the latter. Egyptians all round, I may add, perfectly recognize the force of the British claim to the control of the Suez Canal, though they comment, as they well may, on the fashion in which the people whose labour constructed the canal, and through whose land it is made, have been manœuvred out of all the profit it has brought, while the nation which most determinedly opposed the project has entered into the fruit of their labours.

What our Egyptian monitor asks for is in the first place better administration than now exists in the matters of law, justice, public and private sanitation, city improvement, poor relief, appointment of officials, agricultural training and supervision, and education in general. He shows that while lack of funds is pleaded as a reason for neglecting both hygiene and popular education, large sums are spent on a variety of institutions and attractions which minister and appeal solely to educated European residents and visitors, and are wholly over the heads of the vast mass of the people. He shows that in

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Egypt as elsewhere, no matter what be the prosperity, there is much squalid poverty. He shows gross under-payment of native officials, and what is relatively gross over-payment of English officials. He points to what is so often noticed by English travellers in India—an offensive tone on the part of English officials towards natives. It is not for its own sake that he advocates a measure of self-government; it is for the sake of the elevation of the people, and for the correction of the misgovernment that is inevitable under any rule where the people is wholly in tutelage.

To meet him in the old fashion, by blankly asseverating the incapacity of Egyptians for self-rule, will be to do something worse than to reiterate unreasoningly unconsidered formulas. It will be to ignore unscrupulously the precise promises of British administrators and politicians, chronically repeated during a quarter of a century. To the generalities of the officials who dwell on the dangers of "premature" establishment of self-governing institutions, and all the time do nothing whatever, the Egyptian pressingly replies: "Yes, but what of your national promises? Did they mean nothing? Granted that it is dangerous to go fast, what about the danger of standing still? Did not the promises of your predecessors imply that that is the greatest danger of all? Have you wholly renounced your avowed intentions?" It would almost seem as if we had. The maxim formerly current was that it was our business to "prepare the Egyptians for self-government." We are told that the art of self-government cannot be taught; which is indeed a truism if it means simply that no nation can be taught it dictatorially or by mere precept, without

the slightest exercise of the function. But when the administrators of last generation talked of teaching the Egyptians to govern themselves they were understood as a matter of course to propose to develop Egyptian education in the ordinary sense of the term, and further to give them successive and widening experiences in the partial management of their affairs. Neither of these things has been done. Only within the past year or two has any sign of energy been shown on the side of popular education ; the existing system is profoundly faulty ; and of educative function in the way of tentative self-government the Egyptian people have had practically no experience outside of one or two small municipalities. The two "Chambers" are absolutely functionless, and the so-called self-government of the provinces has admittedly been a simulacrum. Everywhere the British Control dominates through its inspectors ; everywhere native initiative is discredited and native self-respect snubbed ; everywhere the British element in the Civil Service is on the increase ; everywhere its rising salaries are building up powerful vested interests. The promises of the past are kept neither in the letter nor in the spirit ; and both in Egypt and in England a section of the imperialistic school more and more brazenly scouts the thought of keeping them at all. It is a former American Consul-General for Egypt, not at all unfriendly to the British Control, who wrote eight and a half years ago that " those who were children in the years of the bombardment are now in the prime of their lives, and England has had ample time to fit them for fair administrative work, yet she has done so only in small measure," and that " the schools of the American Presbyterian Mission

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have done tenfold more for the cause of education and the spread of the English language in Egypt than has Great Britain." The same qualified observer comments on the obvious disposition of English imperialists to tread all pledges under foot and make Egypt a province of the British Empire.<sup>1</sup> And it is one with a still more intimate knowledge of Egyptian life, and still more recognizant of Lord Cromer's financial and other achievements in Egypt, who writes that "to-day, in spite of all that has been done, Egypt in one most vital matter (the possession of a class qualified for governing) stands absolutely far behind the position it occupied when the English occupation commenced," and that "England will not have fulfilled her duty to the Egyptians or to herself until she has taught the people to govern themselves."<sup>2</sup>

It is for Sir Eldon Gorst to show whether on the present anomalous official basis—the arrangement under which a British Consul-General governs an alien nation with but a nominal supervision from a Foreign Office which avowedly prefers to give him a "free hand"—our line of action can be rectified. And it will be for the British people to show by encouragement or by monition, as may be necessary, whether it is concerned to guard its honour in Egypt. For it cannot be too plainly said to the British Liberal that his honour at least is involved. He must know well that every step towards democratic government in his own country in modern times has been made in the teeth of the resistance of the so-

<sup>1</sup> *Present-Day Egypt*, by F. C. Penfield, 1899, pp. 326, 334-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Bonaparte in Egypt and the Egyptians of To-day*, by Haji A. Browne, 1907, pp. 289, 293.

called ruling class of his own countrymen. If he is content to leave the Egyptians in the same fashion to struggle long and painfully for their admitted rights, doing nothing to further their fair claim, he will simply be playing towards them the part played by Toryism towards his own fathers. If he yields to the bare pretence that they are unfit for any measure of self-government, he is endorsing the formula that was used against every extension of the franchise in his own land. The town artisan and the agricultural labourer were within living memory declared by English Conservatives and Whigs to be unfitted for the suffrage. The difference between them and the people of Egypt can be only one of degree; and the difference of degree is fully admitted by the moderate reformers of Egypt, who do but ask to have their countrymen put in a position to qualify themselves for fuller self-government.

The British Liberal who has learned the political lessons of the past generation will not be led astray by the argument, so often and so maliciously used by the English and French journalists who daily asperse Egyptians on Egyptian soil, that the Nationalists there are divided among themselves. Of course they are. They are divided in their own way as Englishmen are divided into Liberals, Tories, and Labourites; as English Tories are divided into Tariff-Reformers and Free-Traders; as English Liberals are divided into democrats and imperialists; as Irish Home-Rulers are divided; as Socialists are divided; as free men everywhere and always have been and always will be divided in opinion on matters of political action. Where there is no political division there is no politics. Such facts as these, and such pleas as that of "in-

capacity" or "prematureness," never induced Englishmen in the mass to hold that self-government should be denied to Greeks, Servians, Bulgarians, Roumanians, Russians, or even Persians. It is only where they themselves are dominant that they are prone to deny to any race the training which they know to have worked their own political salvation. And in that sinister attitude they cannot long remain without peril to themselves. Already they have for the most part realized the folly of ascribing to "Irish character" the miscarriages of their own governance in Ireland; and it would be terrible indeed if, while those whom they once misgoverned had progressed in self-knowledge and in aspiration, they themselves did not rise to new and nobler ideals of comradeship with the races whom it is in their power to aid upward and onward.

It is in the belief that the publication of these letters will help towards such a consummation that I accede to a request to introduce them to my fellow-countrymen. I am satisfied of their good faith, and of the competence of this writer to speak on Egyptian problems. His ideas have been carefully rendered in English; and if his metaphors at times seem over-Oriental to the English reader, the latter need hardly be reminded that he is likely to get more insight into Egyptian needs and ideas from one who thus thinks with an Egyptian mind than from pleasure-seeking tourists, or capitalists whose simple measure of the merit of any government in Egypt is the quantity of dividend they are enabled to extract from it. For once in a way, he may do well to listen to the earnest pleadings of an Egyptian gentleman.

J. M. ROBERTSON.

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## I PRELIMINARY

MY DEAR SIR,—

His Majesty's Government having recently<sup>1</sup> acknowledged in the House of Commons its responsibility to Parliament for the administration of the affairs of Egypt, the time seems to me opportune for venturing to address you upon that important subject.

It savours perhaps of platitude to premise that never at any time, nor in any State upon the face of our globe, has a Government been carried on to the complete satisfaction of all classes of the governed ; and Egypt, with her mixture of races and her polyglot population, could hardly be expected to form an exception to this rule. The Egyptians therefore, like other nations, have their grievances, but, owing to various causes, the conditions for ventilating them have not hitherto been propitious. Chief amongst these causes have been the unexampled material progress which

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1905.

has been continuous for nearly the last quarter of a century. When we go back to the time previous to British predominance, and view the condition of the people, every unbiased critic must be lost in admiration at the magnificent results wrought by the patience, industry and administrative ability of that diplomatist who for twenty-three years past, in the face of unparalleled obstacles, has guided Egypt's destinies with such remarkable success. His annual reports, which form the brief but brilliant record of his labours, are read with ever-increasing interest and satisfaction, and it is felt, no doubt, by the British public at large, and probably in a greater measure in official circles, that, to use a homely phrase, "it is best to leave well alone." Any questioning of the policy pursued, not to speak of active interference, might, in the opinion of many of your countrymen, be productive of unforeseen evils of the gravest kind, in that it might weaken the hands of your great Pro-consul, Lord Cromer ; and therefore they would have all independent criticism suppressed. This view seems to be generally held by those representatives of the British Press who are accredited to Egypt. Ignorant alike of the language of the people, and their religion, habits and traditions, "and

associating exclusively with their British compatriots, they are compelled to rely wholly for their information upon British official sources. Appearances, too, are deceptive. To a casual observer the whole administrative machine seems to move smoothly and with absolute precision, and it is only by careful examination that we discover its not insignificant imperfections. Centuries of ceaseless oppression have habituated the bulk of the Egyptians to suffer in silence, afraid that greater evils than those they know of might supervene were they to air their complaints as do the peoples of Europe. Information from native sources filters at rare intervals through to England, and hence it happens that neither in the British Parliament nor in the Press have voices been raised in the least degree discordant with official utterances from Cairo.

The task which I have set myself is to endeavour to bring under your notice matters affecting the administration of Egyptian affairs which appear to me to be capable of amendment ; and in doing so I beg you to believe that I am approaching these questions in no carping spirit, nor with any desire for mere fault-finding. On the contrary, I wish it to be understood that I yield to no man in

my recognition of Lord Cromer's splendid services. But I cherish the sincere belief that fair and candid criticism, if well directed, cannot but be advantageous to all whom it concerns.

Now, at the outset it is essential that I should state the attitude I take up regarding Egyptian affairs, and the length I am wishful to go on the path of Reform. Accepting the British Occupation as an accomplished fact, what I ask is that the fullest measure of political liberty be accorded to the Egyptian people compatible with British Predominance, and consistent with the stage of progress at which they have arrived. The stage of progress is of course a matter upon which opinions will necessarily differ. There is, undoubtedly, a demand amongst the Egyptians themselves that their Legislative Council and their General Assembly—bodies created by Lord Dufferin, which possess, up to the present, merely a consultative voice—should be invested with Parliamentary powers. I unhappily find myself in disagreement with Lord Cromer in thinking that the time has come for such a reform ; but in this connection I would remind you that on February 24, 1904, a motion was carried by a large majority in the Egyptian General Assembly in favour of

my contention. On the other hand, I heartily endorse Lord Cromer's opinion that no changes that might be considered revolutionary should be made in the system of Government, the laws, or their administration.

Having said thus much, I shall naturally be asked, what is my principal ground of complaint? I will endeavour to state it as plainly and succinctly as I can. I maintain that it is not by force of arms nor the display of physical power that England will strengthen her hold upon the Egyptian people—a people who, according to Sir D. McKenzie Wallace, are the most easily governed in the world—but by a more sympathetic regard for their feelings, their religion, their traditions, their true needs, their reasonable and legitimate aspirations. This, I am quite prepared to hear from the lips of those who are unacquainted with Egypt, is very sentimental and unsubstantial. But those who have lived for any length of time in intimate and friendly relations with the people, who speak their language and respect their sincere observance of their religious tenets, will not venture to contradict me when I assert that this goes to the very root of things. It is, indeed, fundamental. Lord Dufferin, who had unrivalled opportunities of judging, and whose

stay in Egypt was all too brief, thoroughly appreciated this point of view ; and though political memories are proverbially weak, his name is, even at this distance of time, revered by Egyptians who were witnesses of his labours.

In spite of all the beneficial changes which have been effected under British influence, the native Egyptian exhibits no gratitude ; he accepts these advantages sullenly and without the smallest cordiality. He has been accurately described by one who knows him well—Mr. Talbot Kelly, who wrote an excellent work on Egypt—as “prosperous and discontented.” Why is this ? Is he not a human being whose feelings can be stirred by benefits conferred ? Of course he is, and quick to recognize and return with Oriental lavishness gratitude for favours received. Why then does he stand aloof ? It is because his character has not yet been rightly understood by his British rulers. Instead of treating the Egyptians as friends whose moral uplifting is Britain’s special charge, instead of endeavouring to revive in them a spirit of self-dependence which their past sad history and vicissitudes have well-nigh annihilated, the British authorities act towards them as victors, and rule their country as a

vanquished State. It seems to me important that you should try to find out the native view of the British intervention in Egypt, of its methods and motives, however unpalatable that view may be, and however little you may agree with it.

I am in a position which will enable me to place before you the sentiments of the thoughtful Egyptian upon the British Occupation, but this would extend to too great a length for my prefatory letter. I prefer to leave it for a second communication. The more the Egyptian problem is studied dispassionately, the more manifest will it become to the unprejudiced observer that whilst British rule in Egypt has been unprecedentedly successful in one direction, it has been a failure hitherto in another. British rule has done little or nothing to reconcile the native to his new masters, but much to wound his acute susceptibilities and estrange him. Instead of striving, as should have been done, to minimize and obliterate the pride of race and prejudice of colour, it has, unintentionally I will hope, rather contributed to emphasize and perpetuate them. Had the Egyptians received different treatment at British hands, they would, in my belief, have forgotten most, if not all, of their grievances,

instead of secretly harbouring them. British authorities are never tired of reminding them that they are a subject, i.e. an inferior race, with whom it would be derogatory for Britons to associate upon equal terms. Such a course of conduct I know is not recommended in Lord Cromer's Annual Reports. On the contrary, he declares his sympathy with the Egyptians, and encourages, in State documents, British officials in the Egyptian service to manifest towards the people sentiments that are noble and generous. But his counsel has not been followed.

The *material* progress of Egypt, thanks to Lord Cromer's admirable governance, is acknowledged on all hands. But what are his achievements as regards its *moral* advancement? In other words, has moral kept pace with material progress in Egypt? I greatly fear that the answer must be in the negative. Crime, notwithstanding prosperity, has for several years past increased; and that the rate of increase is less in 1904 compared with 1903 (Annual Report for 1904, p. 44) is a result for which Lord Cromer, it seems to me, takes credit unduly.<sup>1</sup> Besides this, and perhaps in connexion with it, drink is making

<sup>1</sup> [In the Report for 1905, a further increase of crime is avowed and deplored.—*Ed.*]

inroads amongst the native population (Annual Report for 1904, pp. 54, 55) in defiance of the teaching of the Koran. This loosening of the religious tie is, especially in the East, of most unfavourable augury. What stronger proofs could be offered that moral and material progress have not marched hand in hand ? The facts point to a condition of moral degeneracy gradually creeping over the nation, which all true friends of Egypt must equally deplore, and which it is Britain's bounden duty to endeavour, by every possible means, to arrest.

“ No nation,” writes Auguste Comte, in his *Positive Philosophy*, “ can be said to advance which merely has to show its material development. Nor indeed is intellectual progress of any value unless accompanied by moral regeneration. . . . It is to moral teaching that we must look for organic development.” Insufficient attention, I regret to say, has been paid to this sociological doctrine in Egypt.

I must here conclude the present communication, reserving for a future occasion when I have the honour of addressing you the discussion of questions of a more *practical* character. Indeed there are few departments of the administration upon which I could not

offer some words of criticism ; but in order that this correspondence may not run into undue length, I shall endeavour to make a selection of topics.

## II

### THE TYPICAL EGYPTIAN

**M**Y DEAR SIR,—

In the last letter which I had the honour of addressing to you I proposed to place before you a consensus of native public opinion relative to the British intervention, its methods and motives, gleaned from reliable sources ; and in the present communication I shall endeavour to redeem, as best I can, the promise previously held out.

The Egyptian, as before indicated, is very reticent. He does not wear his heart upon his sleeve, his long enslavement during the past having made him mistrustful and suspicious of strangers. To gain his confidence is therefore no easy matter, but requires time, patience and something more than a superficial knowledge of his speech and character. With these preliminary observations I will now venture to tell you what the typical Egyptian would say, dared he to become articulate.

“ You British charge us with ingratitude, but we fail to see the justice of that accusation. For what ought we to be grateful ? Egypt’s extremity was England’s opportunity. Taking advantage of our financial embarrassment to introduce the control, and profiting, subsequently, by the Arabi revolt, you, uninvited and by force of arms, possessed yourselves of our country under the plea of restoring the authority of the Khedive, re-establishing internal order, and guaranteeing us from external aggression. This was a mere pretext for planting your army in Egypt, at a cost to the Egyptian Treasury of approximately £100,000 sterling a year. The true reason for the British Occupation was that Egypt is on the high road to India, and British policy demanded that the passage of the Suez Canal should be secured to Great Britain at all hazards. In re-asserting the Khedive’s authority you took care that though he might be allowed to reign, he should never rule. Our Ministers are mere ciphers, bound to obey the behests of their British ‘ advisers,’ and for whom, because they wear the Khedivial livery—but without a shred of authority—we are forced to provide exorbitant salaries.

“ Egypt since the Occupation has been

administered by an ever-increasing body of functionaries alien to us in race, religion, language and allegiance. These men are all highly paid for their rather light services—not to speak of the liberal pensions voted to them upon retirement after comparatively short terms of office. On the other hand, Government service is still regarded by a large section of Egyptians as the single career in which a man may claim to be honoured amongst his fellows. In consequence, however, of the continuously growing influx of foreigners who receive Government appointments, not a few of our worthy and capable compatriots have been cashiered, and the difficulty is ever becoming greater of finding posts for those who, having passed through the Government schools, are thereby fitted for no other occupations.

“ You professed when you occupied this country that it would be your endeavour ‘ to teach the Egyptians to govern themselves.’ Is it by excluding them from Government positions of authority, and by divesting them of all initiative and responsibility, that you can hope to accomplish this desideratum ?

“ Take again the Army. That, too, is officered by Englishmen. In instances innumerable you have promoted your young

untried military men over the heads of native Egyptian officers whose lives have been passed, and whose blood has been shed, in the service of their country. Was not this injustice the real if unavowed cause of the troops in the Soudan a few years ago very nearly mutinying ? I freely admit that you have much improved our Army as a fighting force ; but what, I ask, would happen if, for some reason or other which I cannot at present foresee, those Englishmen who fill the highest military posts were suddenly withdrawn ? Our Army would then immediately crumble into a mere disorderly rabble. Let any one who doubts the probability of my prediction ascertain for himself what actually occurred on the return from the last Mecca Pilgrimage. He will search vainly, I know, in Lord Cromer's latest Annual Report for an account of that incident. It is not to be found there.

“ You tell us too that ‘ the schoolmaster is abroad.’ So he is, but it is the Englishman rather than the Egyptian who profits by it. Was it not only the other day we read in the local European Press that the Secretary General of the Education Department (Mr. Dunlop) had gone to England to engage twenty-five *more* English masters ? Your

newspapers, which are presumed to reflect British public opinion, pretend to condemn the attempt to Russianize the Poles and the Finlanders by obliging the latter to speak Russian in the schools ; but are you doing much else here ? Is not every one attending the Government schools, Primary, Secondary and Technical, compelled to receive instruction in nearly all branches of knowledge in a foreign tongue, and from teachers for the most part unfamiliar with Arabic ? What about your conquered *foes*, the Boers ? Do they not fare better ?

“ As to Egypt’s prosperity since the advent of British rule, have you not obtained your fair share ? Have not new markets been opened to you ? Has not our country provided you scope for vast engineering, agricultural, and other industrial enterprises ? Have you not secured banking, mining, railway and land concessions on your own terms, thus obtaining highly profitable opportunities for the investment of your capital ? Then why should we be expected to praise Heaven, fasting, for your coming among us ? Is it not rather you English who should be grateful to Providence for delivering the land flowing with milk and honey into your hands ? ”

I have merely endeavoured to interpret, and have concentrated here, for your consideration, a few salient points dealing with native opinion, leaving others for future treatment. Far be it from me to think that such an attitude of mind should be encouraged. I deprecate and deeply deplore it. But whilst I can scarcely expect the British authorities in Egypt to admit the accuracy of these assertions, I cannot blind myself to the fact that there is a thick stratum of truth running through them; and this, together with the circumstance that they are probably new or unfamiliar to those whose sources of information are exclusively official, must be my justification for bringing them to your attention.

### III

## THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN THE NATIVE COURTS

**M**Y DEAR SIR,—

The establishment and administration of the law is admittedly the most important of the internal functions of Government. Hume, the English philosopher, asserts in a well-known essay that “we are to look upon all the vast apparatus of our government as having ultimately no other object or purpose but the distribution of justice. . . . Kings and Parliaments, fleets and armies, officers of the court, of revenue, ambassadors, ministers and privy councillors, are all subordinate in their end to this part of administration.”

There is some exaggeration in this statement, since, for instance, the objection that a French province has to being conquered and annexed by Germany is not due mainly to a fear of bad administration by German judges, but more to the national sentiment which

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makes it desire to remain a part of the French State. Still Hume's view is so far true as to make it proper for those whose province it is to design the work that a Government has to do, to direct their attention first of all to the establishment and administration of a good system of law.

It is impossible to over-estimate the value of tribunals giving decisions according to the truth and the right, as compared with those too frequently characterized by all that is the reverse. The army may keep off foreign invasion or put down internal riot ; the police may with the utmost efficiency protect persons and property from lawless aggression ; the Government may exercise the most parental rule over all ; the legislature may enact the most beneficial laws ; the taxes to provide the funds for these ends may be laid on with discrimination and realized with fairness ; commerce may be encouraged and permitted to expand with all its natural and inherent powers of productiveness ; agriculture may be extended and secured against adverse seasons by abundant means of irrigation ; the communications of the country may be all that art can make them ; peace, prosperity and abundance, as dependent upon all these resources, may characterize the people and the

land ; but if the law courts have no certain rule to guide them, if the agency is unworthy of the trust reposed in it, if judgments are given against reason and truth and, it may be, against law, and are unstable and variable as the wind, the benefits I speak of are placed in risk or dissipated ; lives and liberties are jeopardized, and often actually sacrificed ; and fraud, through legal formalities, triumphs over right. The wealth gained or inherited, and the home and comfort dependent upon it, may pass over to another, whose case is proved by perjured witnesses before a weak or perverted judge.

In August last a question was asked in the British House of Commons framed in the following terms :—“ Whether, seeing that there has been during the last few years a continuous increase in the number of penal offences committed by natives, as shown by Lord Cromer’s Annual Reports, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs will advise the Egyptian Government to appoint a Commission of Inquiry into the qualification of the judicial officers, both European and Egyptian, concerned in the administration of justice, into the system of criminal procedure now in operation in Egypt and the laws relating to penal offences in Egypt.”

There is no one in this country acquainted with the administration of justice, saving of course the responsible officials whose optimism blinds them to the actual condition of affairs, who would not have welcomed such an inquiry as calculated to prove of immeasurable benefit to the Egyptian nation. Nevertheless, the inquiry was refused. How necessary such an inquiry is I will endeavour to show.

It may be said without exaggeration that there is no department of the Anglo-Egyptian Administration so weak and defective as that of the Ministry of Justice.

Needless to premise that the Ministry is entirely controlled by Englishmen, whose method of selection for their posts is one of pure patronage.

For obvious reasons I refrain from entering into particulars of a personal nature. Inquiry would amply show that most of those selected to fill eminent positions in the judicature, and to discharge correspondingly responsible duties, are neither of such established reputation in their profession as to impress their native colleagues with the requisite authority, nor of such ripe experience that their judgment, though fallible as with all mortals, may, in general, command public confidence and respect. If their record be examined, it

will be found that some of them, though not all, have fulfilled the perfunctory requirement of eating the prescribed number of dinners at an English Inn of Court, and have been called to the English Bar after reading, perhaps, for a brief period, in an English barrister's chambers. But, as far as I have been able to ascertain, few of them have ever conducted a case in a European Court of Law, or have ever played within its precincts any more important rôle than that of a casual spectator.

Is this the class of man who, enjoying very high emoluments, supplemented by lucrative lectureships at the Khedivial School of Law, should have confided to his keeping the lives, liberties and property of the Egyptian people? I take leave to assert that the employment of unqualified or imperfectly trained officials by the Ministry of Justice is a stumbling-block to the fair and efficient administration of the law, humiliating to the nominees, and an affront to dignity and common sense.

Lord Curzon recently stated that the success of the English in India was due to the fact that the flower of your manhood was sent to that country. Converse conditions will in large measure account for the failure

of British administration in Egypt. Speaking generally, the best men are certainly not selected to fill posts in this country. It is a grave defect in the distribution of judicial posts that frequently British members of the Bench are appointed to the Court of Appeal without having held office in the Court of First Instance.

The number of British judges in the Native Court of Appeal is almost equivalent to that of the Egyptians, but of course the influence and authority of the former is paramount. I cannot help thinking that so large an infusion of the English element has its disadvantages. Their education and their whole turn of mind are likely to be at variance with the views of the native judges, and the changes they would seek must be with a leaning to the extension of the forms and principles of the law they best understand. They are slow to admit the value of many of the institutions of the natives, of the inflexibility of their usages ; they judge of the character of the inhabitants from an alien standpoint. All this is natural. Men cannot resign, as circumstances require, feelings and opinions imbibed in youth and cherished in age. After a certain period of life, neither languages nor knowledge of a novel character are easily attained. Unfortunately,

however, the opinions such judges give would have more weight with numbers in England than those of the most experienced public servants in Egypt. They would be more suited to all who are not minutely acquainted with the details of Egyptian government and the character of its subjects. But I am bound to observe that the introduction of such persons into the higher branches of the administration can but have for its effect the progressive depression and deterioration of the Egyptian civil service.

The infusion of so large a British element into the Native Appellate Court was designed no doubt to strengthen that body and thus to impart vigour to the whole hierarchy. This, to my thinking, is a case of the roof sustaining the foundations in lieu of the foundations sustaining the roof. It is as if a universal heart were provided for an extensive community from which life-blood and vitality are to flow to every member. One doubts the strength of the pulsations of this remote organ, even if we could be assured that its arterial stream were consonant to the nature of the frame to be supported and invigorated by it. Where this stream is largely drawn from a foreign element, its nutritive qualities must necessarily fail. It is much to be preferred

that every man should have a heart and a mind of his own.

It is unfortunately the case with the class of Englishman by whom we are governed that no sooner does he set his foot in our country than he ridicules and abuses whatever he finds in it different from his own ; and if he has the power, instead of adopting those of our land, to which he has come for his own benefit, he endeavours to compel all the inhabitants to submit to his notions of what is right.

It is perhaps but natural that with the vast majority of your English functionaries on their first arrival in Egypt evil communications corrupt good manners. They fall into the mode of thinking which they find common amongst their English colleagues. They take it for granted that the natives are a low, degraded set, with very few good qualities, and that their institutions and customs are excessively bad ; whilst they and theirs, on the contrary, are everything that is excellent, and the Egyptians ought to be pleased and grateful to them for substituting a good government for their bad one. And what happens to the exiguous and insignificant minority who have strength of character enough to withstand the force of association ?

I say it with regret, they are hustled out of the service for being "too friendly to the natives." Such is the Draconian discipline to which the Anglo-Egyptian official is subjected. Do not let me be misunderstood. I am unwilling to believe that the characteristics I have delineated are common to and inveterate in the English nation as a whole. Were that my belief, these letters would never have been written. But from my visits to your country my conviction is confirmed that the typical Anglo-Egyptian functionary is a genus apart, that his unenviable qualities are due to the force of the *régime* to which he is required to conform, and that contrasted with the bulk of the British nation he marks the exception, not the rule.

I should perhaps mention by the way that the judges are not judges in the sense in which you in your country regard the holders of that office. They are mere judicial officers bound to be at the beck and call of those who are their hierarchical superiors.

The weakness of their position and the consequent injury to the administration of justice will be manifest on the mere statement of this fact to the most superficial of observers.

Another cause of the ill success of British justice in Egypt is that most of the judicial

officers are appointed when much too young. Learning, patience, temper, judgment, penetration and experience are the necessary qualifications of a good judge. A young man may possess some of these qualities, but nature will hardly admit of being so forced as to bring them all to maturity before the season of age. For these reasons, and without imputing any natural defect of judgment to the junior members of the Bench, I venture to think them unsuited for judicial office.

The contempt with which the native judiciary, and, in fact, all native functionaries are treated by their British colleagues is a source of most serious complaint. To *think* is a crime ; to yield blind obedience and to submit to being the butt upon which British officials, even when subordinate, may demonstrate their superior intelligence by meddlesome interference and captious fault-finding, is the summit of virtue in native Government officials. Too little regard is paid to their opinions, experience and learning. They are ever kept at a distance. Their abilities and talents are estimated too lightly, and consequently not alone the judicial but the whole British Administration in Egypt is too much founded upon European notions and doctrines. With closer association you would,

I believe, better succeed in adapting your measures to our rights, usages and comforts. But as long as you keep the native population at such a distance, and think so meanly of their capabilities, so long will you fail to understand your mission and fulfil your pledges.



## IV

### EUROPEAN AND NATIVE JUDGES

**M**Y DEAR SIR,—

According to a Ministerial Decree published in the *Journal Officiel* of November, 1904, I find that judges (as well as functionaries attached to the Ministry of Justice) can be lawfully appointed to the native courts without knowing a word of Arabic, which is the language exclusively employed both for documentary and oral evidence, the speeches of advocates, and in fact the conduct of the whole proceedings.

Another surprising fact is that until the date of the Decree they might continue to sit in those courts whilst remaining absolutely ignorant of all that was taking place in their presence. The Decree of 1904 introduces an innovation, though unfortunately its effect is not retrospective. Were it so, several of the chief officials for many years connected with the Ministry of Justice would find themselves deprived of their very lucrative posts.

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I will, however, confine my observations chiefly to the judges. Henceforth those newly appointed are, upon the cart-before-the-horse principle so prevalent in Egypt, to be examined in Arabic. As to what will happen to them if they fail to pass, the Decree is silent. As there are hardly any European judges remaining on the Bench of the native courts who are not Englishmen, and as all recent appointments have been given to gentlemen of that nationality, it is in all probability intended to restrict nomination to such posts in the future to Englishmen. Such being the case, I propose to consider the question of associating natives and Europeans on the Bench for the trial and determination of native affairs, in its wider aspects.

In approaching the consideration of this matter, I should endeavour to remove the possible misapprehension that I am of those who deem it wise or expedient at the present stage of progress of Egyptian civilization to eliminate entirely from the native courts of law (ecclesiastical courts apart) the European element. I would wish it to be understood that I entertain the opposite opinion. There can be no doubt, to my way of thinking, that the advantage of associating European judges, when properly qualified, with Egyptian

judges, is considerable. To the superiority of the native over the European in eliciting and judging of native testimony there is, with rare exceptions, abundant proof. The proposition is, in fact, self-evident. The one is working in his own language, among his own people. He is familiar with their turns of thought, their objects and their devices. He can detect the faintest index that a phrase may afford, and trace the motive of every common action. He knows what interests will affect the testimony. The circumstances spoken of, the transactions, the customs, are all equally familiar to him. He knows what questions to put, and how to estimate the answers given. He can weigh accurately all the surrounding probabilities. His mind, stored with all such facilities and knowledge, acts promptly. He may be said to arrive at his judgment of the fitness or the truth of what is put before him almost by intuition. Nature in all her adjuncts serves him. But to the European all is foreign ; all has to be acquired by painful labour, and at the best but imperfectly. His intelligence may not be of the highest order. The faculty of acquiring a foreign language is in a degree a peculiar one. He may be wanting in observation and discernment. He may be deficient

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in industry. He is dependent on others for his information, and these may mislead him. He has to struggle also against preconceived notions, obtained from experiences in another land. Easily, perhaps, duped, he gets disheartened in his toils upon the judgment seat. The natives of the lower class practise upon him more than they would venture to do upon a compatriot. The falsehoods ranging around him at length make him more sceptical, and he rejects all evidence because unable to sift any.

There can be no doubt, then, of the advantages of the native judges in judging of transactions amongst this people through the testimony of their compatriots. On the other hand, there is an important circumstance which forbids the application of this agency in its entirety. Native justice has not yet reached at all points the ethical standard prevalent amongst the more enlightened nations of modern Europe.

It must not, too, be forgotten that education in Egypt, owing to radical imperfections in the system, and the incapacity of those who are entrusted with its direction, is lamentably defective. It may indeed be said to be still in swaddling clothes. But besides, and, I maintain, intimately connected with this, a

thoroughly right and beneficial system of education must have a long course, and receive the aid of abundant and powerful auxiliaries, to create or reproduce a lofty conception of right in that section of the nation from which the judicial element is drawn. Taking it for granted that European supervision is absolutely required, there can be no better way of providing it than by associating the European with the native on the same Bench. It would only be on the occurrence of supineness or utter blindness that the means of justice, under this system of dispensing it, could be seriously perverted. Nor can I conceive a system so well calculated to promote, under proper conditions, the elevation of those whose training has been purely Oriental. Thus aided, the Egyptian can be subjected to no disparaging over-rulings. He should have the co-operation rather than the control. Only if placed on an official equality with the European can there be a hope of his rising to the same high sense of public duty.

From the arguments above advanced it follows that the benefits accruing to native judges by their association on the Bench with Europeans are incontestable, subject, however, to the all-important and indispensable qualification that the latter are persons who have

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received a thorough training in their profession. The advantage, I may add, is a mutual one. The Egyptian is placed within the influence of a mind and a character educated and formed in a country renowned for the high principles, the civilization and the moral rectitude of its inhabitants, and the European assists himself with the patience, the acuteness and the intimate local knowledge of the Egyptian. The diversity in training should enable each to supply that which may be wanting in the intellectual equipment of the other, to impart to his colleague that which he possesses of national or educational power, and the compass of their combined qualifications must necessarily pervade any judgments they may agree upon.

The salient, indeed the most flagrant, blot upon the European judiciary in Egypt as at present constituted—a defect which is equally conspicuous at the Ministry of Justice—is the faulty method of selection. Under the present *régime* Englishmen are chosen hap-hazard from the ranks of briefless barristers who may be seen idling about British law courts, none of whom, obviously, has any actual acquaintance with the law of this country as administered in the native courts, nor with the language, habits, or customs of

the people. I take leave to question whether the barrister-judge suddenly and indiscriminately thrust amongst Orientals, ignorant of their national characteristics, their native tongue and their transactions, or, only for a special end, that of securing his seat on the Bench, superficially supplied with such knowledge, will prove the man to purify and render sweet a justice which unhappily is but too often contaminated at its sources. Give such a man all the facts, and he may deal with them with judicial precision according to the most approved principles of his parent land ; but his ability to elicit the facts with any approach to accuracy is a very serious matter for doubt. He might perhaps be a good judge in England, and still a bad one in a country like Egypt, where he would, apart from the above considerations, be far removed from all those checks which have a restraining and sobering influence in the home country. Whatever may be the exception to be made in favour of some individual who may rise above the disqualifications that surround him, English barristers as a class do not from our past experience present a body calculated to fill with effect the Bench of Egypt.

From inquiries made I learn that they are called to the Bar at about the age of twenty-

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six. The process affords no assurance of qualification. They are bound to pass a certain number of terms at one of the Inns of Court, and to undergo a perfunctory examination before being admitted to their profession. The security of qualification to the English public is that, without proper acquirements, a barrister remains such merely in name. He obtains no practice. But this security does not exist as respects the Egyptian public. Barristers in good practice in England will not come out to this country ; and, as far as I know, many of those we have here never held a brief in their parent land.

The Bar in England is the stepping-stone to the Bench. This rule is, no doubt, one well suited to the conditions in England, but not so for those who come as judges to this country. In England the barrister is habituated to all he has to judge of from the Bench, when there placed. The language and the people are his own. Their customs and transactions are familiar to him. Their traditions and laws have been his study. But here it is all the reverse. These things, as existing in Egypt, are all new and foreign to him. He has to learn them by prolonged study and acquired experience. I doubt his

preparing himself for the transition from Bar to Bench even at the age of twenty-six, which, as I have stated, is that at which he is ordinarily called to the Bar. He would, naturally, first feel for his prospects in the parent land. When these became gloomy to him he might turn to Egypt as a resource, by seeking to find provision on the Bench. His mind would already have received its bent ; new impressions would not be easily taken up ; and the faculty for acquiring foreign tongues would be deadened. At a later age the disadvantages would be greater. It would be thought a scandal in Europe that a Government, knowing the difficulties that attend the formation of a judicial mind and the acquiring of legal knowledge under favourable circumstances, should nevertheless venture to leave its judicial offices to the hazard of finding such men growing on the spot.

Unless judges are made to understand that they will be required to qualify instead of being found by accident as they are wanted, there can be no hope of improving the very uninstructed character of the European judge in the native courts.

The longest life, spent in the management of an extensive district, would still leave an English gentleman deplorably ignorant of

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much that it would be eminently useful to know ; and it would be well if this circumstance were more generally and constantly dwelt upon. A Dutch or a German gentleman suddenly called upon to administer the affairs of an English county would be expected to betray, throughout life, innumerable ignorances, and to fall into innumerable errors in regard to the community. He would have spoken from his infancy merely a different language of the same family ; he would have been instructed to adore the same God in the same manner ; he would have been taught to search the same sacred volume for the rules of life and for the grounds of his hopes of immortality ; he would have drunk in youth at the same fountains of ancient genius ; his thoughts would have been shaped upon the same models of taste, and their current directed by the same maxims of wisdom ; the same precepts and the same examples would, for the most part, have guided him in his conceptions of decency and honour ; the same sciences would have prescribed the general principles of civil and international right ; he would find the same acts providing nearly for the same wants ; he would mingle in all the social enjoyments of private life ; he would join in public worship, and partake

in most of the acts of public bodies ; he might form the closest domestic relations with those of the new country. Yet still the foreigner would prevail : and his judgment would be received with mistrust on the simplest municipal regulation. Nay, a citizen of the same country would be expected long and anxiously to inquire before he ventured an opinion on any matter foreign to his ordinary profession. Experience in agriculture, for instance, is claimed only by those whose daily occupation and daily bread it has been for a long series of years. How then are we to account for the confidence with which the possession of knowledge in regard to Egyptian affairs is so often assumed, or for the apparent indifference with which the means of lessening palpable ignorance are too generally regarded ? What would be your feelings if subjected to the best-meant blunders of a foreign despot, and that in matters touching the nearest and dearest interests of life ? With what sentiments would you regard the arrival of a stranger armed with so much power for good or evil, with new plans, new prejudices and new retainers ? Then think of us, to whom such things are actually happening !

It is taken as a matter of course that the

European judge should be familiar with the language of the country in which he administers justice. The efficiency of the judge thus qualified over one who has to depend upon an interpreter is indisputable. And it is equally obvious that the interpreter must be of a lower class than the judge, and that his susceptibility to corrupt influences may render nugatory the integrity of the judge. The strength of the strong instrument will thus be reduced by necessary association with the feeble one, the condition of the weakest link in a chain representing the power of the whole. It is to be deeply regretted that while this need of qualification in language is so apparent and so universally allowed, it is one so little attended to in the distribution of office.

For the combination of European and Egyptian on the judicial Bench to be efficient, it is essential that the European should, prior to taking his seat on the Bench, have served an apprenticeship in Egypt of some years' duration, in order to obtain intimacy with the people, their language, habits, customs, transactions and necessities. He should be placed amongst them in early life, thus becoming, while fresh and impressionable himself, familiarized with the people, learning thereby to

be reconciled to have his lot cast amongst them, and imbibing an interest in their welfare.

Above I have indicated what I believe to be one of the principal sources of weakness in the European judiciary of the native courts —a weakness which, if my view be correct, the feeble palliative to be applied by the recent regulations as to examination is powerless to remedy. It is indeed ludicrous to suppose that an examination in Arabic can be an efficient cure for present deficiencies. They lie far too deeply implanted in the judicial hierarchy for that. The proper method I hold to be that training in the language and the law should precede, not follow, the appointment to judicial posts, and in support of this contention I need only refer to those "Western models" which it is the desire of the British authorities so sedulously to emulate in Egypt.

There are other glaring defects in the Egyptian judicial system which in my opinion nothing but an inquiry such as was suggested in the British House of Commons in August last could bring to light. I can quite appreciate the stubborn resistance that has been hitherto and probably will again be offered so long as the fear is entertained by those in

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high places that an investigation of that character, if searchingly and impartially conducted, might too ruthlessly expose the nakedness of the land.

## V

### LEGISLATION

MY DEAR SIR,—

I now approach the question of legislation. And here, as might have been anticipated, I discover the same blemishes and defects as were apparent in the existing *personnel* connected with the Ministry of Justice.

In the first place, lack of experience in legislation. There is not a single British official in Egypt who ever was entrusted with the task of framing a law, much less a code of laws, in his own country. Now I venture to suggest that even an experienced lawyer who is nothing more than experienced in his profession is not necessarily suited to be a legislator. Because he has been long conversant about law, the unreflecting attribute great weight to his legislative judgment; whereas his constant habits of fixing his thought on what the law *is*, and withdrawing it from the irrelevant question of what the

law *ought* to be ; his careful observance of a multitude of rules (which afford the more scope for the display of his skill in proportion as they are arbitrary and unaccountable), with a studied indifference to that which is foreign to his business, the *convenience* or *inconvenience* of those rules—may be expected to operate unfavourably on his judgment in questions of legislation, and are likely to counterbalance the advantages of his superior knowledge, even in such points as do bear on the question. This may be predicated by one who is versed in the laws of the country for which he legislates. But what about those who know nothing about the laws, and have no previous experience in any kind of legislative draftsmanship ? The result shows itself in their performances. Instances of crass ignorance display themselves in the law-making of this country at every turn.

The Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure enforced in the native courts are based upon the French ; and, in fact, this country has long been the dumping ground of unsuited European legislation, with but scant regard for native custom or tradition. The above-mentioned codes were hastily compiled, and bore manifest traces of the celerity with which they were drafted. For six long

years the present British advisers to the Egyptian Government have been labouring to revise them'; but the mountain, after so long a travail and much blowing of official trumpets, has brought forth a ridiculous mouse. The result might readily have been foreseen.

I mean it as no disrespect to the gentlemen who are the revisers of the Criminal Codes when I say that I do not consider them qualified in point of experience for the task which was laid upon them and which they undertook. The weighty interests at stake, and the strong sense I have of the true remedial measures for the judicial administration of Egypt, oblige me to use language thus plain; but I hope that my so doing will not expose me to misconstruction. The physicians in consultation over the remedies appropriate for a diseased patient should certainly be personally familiar with his individual condition and symptoms, and no man can be a competent judge of the defects of our judicature as operating among the people of Egypt, and know how to meet them, unless he has himself been involved in the administration, has watched and witnessed its effects, and has seen the outflow of the evils from their sources. Now although it is permissible to believe that the

heads of our Ministry of Justice know something of English law, I venture to assert, without fear of contradiction, that they are mere theorists out of it. Reverse the position, and the force of my observations will exactly appear. What would be said were Egyptian officials called upon to act as jurists and reformers for the tribunals of England?

I think there is a general feeling in this country that your English Law Reformers began at the wrong place, and that they would have rendered a far greater service to our nation had they first set about bettering the administration of the law and improving its *personnel*, even though it might have led to their own resignation. I am constrained to remark that these gentlemen never approached the real sources of our judicial disorders, nor adopted measures that would remedy them. I can recognize their utility in dealing with matters within their own experience, but it is impossible to accept them as competent to judge of the requirements for tribunals in a population known to them only superficially or at second hand.

When considering the means whereby the reformation of the legislative and judicial system is to be effected, it is useful to remember in what way the system was created.

It has not arisen like those institutions which are the safeguard and the pride of the British nation, by gradual and natural growth, springing from the genius and the necessities of the people. It has been brought in suddenly, and in a day, by the arm of power, by a foreign race, shaped after models existing in a distant land, and imposed upon our people without preparation, without consultation of their feelings and wishes, and without respect for their national characteristics and usages. The British authorities set aside the ancient system of administering justice and substituted Courts which were designed to be the humble imitations of the tribunals of France. A French lawyer drew up the regulations for that end, and English lawyers with, at most, a theoretical knowledge of the French system, have patched and tinkered the original French fabric till it has lost whatever homogeneity it once possessed.

Continuing the medical metaphor above employed : the nearer we are to the patient, and the more we have seen of him, the better are we able to judge and treat his disorders. Shall we benefit the patient by introducing him to another climate, artificially arranged for him, still more removed from the characteristics of his native air—the atmosphere of

Paris or London—the dense fogs and mists apparent to those without the scene which hang over those regions?

With such views and thoughts strongly impressed upon my mind, I trust I may be forgiven for disbelieving in the efficacy of the remedies resorted to. I doubt the wisdom of going to Paris or London for a restorative. It is thence that the ailments under notice are to be traced. You have dieted the Egyptians upon food foreign to them, and which they are unable to digest. To provide further supplies can only intensify the disease. Surely it is but due to them to try whether they might not better thrive upon what may resemble in its properties, as nearly as can be secured, the growth of their own soil. There is no security in guiding the sullied stream to settle on its lees in a capacious artificial and ornamental reservoir. And I see no hope in raising the imposing dome of Codes revised which are based upon existing weak walls and unsound foundations.

To counteract the evils at present inherent in the native judicature, "law in a foreign garb," to use a famous phrase of Mr. Gladstone, is no effectual remedy, but on the contrary an added complication of the disease. No; the stream must be watched to its

source, and its noxious ingredients there shut out, that no opening may be left for fermentation and the onward flow of corruption. The foundations of the judicial edifice should be carefully re-laid, and constructed with its walls, as far as may be, of native materials. That is to say, that the system be adapted to the primitive simplicity of the native mind ; that native methods be used as far as practicable ; that all crevices, all covert and tortuous passages which have been known to let in chicanery, falsehood and corruption, be effectually blocked ; that all those defences, those aids to the protection of rights and to the proper direction of the tribunals in judging them, the want of which has been so keenly felt, be supplied ; and that all the cumbersome complexities which obstruct and weigh down, yea, one may say, crush and paralyse the agents of justice, be removed.

The most essential means of ensuring propriety and efficacy in legislation and efficiency in the Courts is to provide the country with laws ample in their directions and easy of administration. All competent experts unite in saying that the laws for this land should be suited to the capacities and the peculiarities of the people, and simple in their provisions and structure. It has been unfor-

tunate for Egypt that those to whom the suggestion and preparation of these laws have been committed are persons to a great degree ignorant of the people, who have become themselves habituated to a most artificial and complicated system of jurisprudence, and have ideas of simplicity very remote from what can here be understood or accepted as simple.

The enlarging the volume of our laws and rendering them more difficult to be understood by those for whose benefit they were intended, is in itself an evil. The great objects to be sought in every system of judicature are publicity, and that the laws by which the nation is protected and controlled should be understood and appreciated by those for whose benefit they are intended. This requires a code to be adapted to the habits, information and knowledge of those for whom it is framed ; but from what has been above pointed out it is clear that the Egyptian codes in no respect fulfil such conditions.

It is an observation as old as the days of Solon, that nations must receive not the best laws, but the best of which they are capable. Indeed, Lord Cromer in one of his recent Annual Reports pertinently quotes the old Latin saying, " Of what avail are laws without

manners ? " In other words, the best legislative provisions would have little beneficial effect even at first, and none at all in a short course of time, unless they were congenial to the disposition and habits, to the religious sentiments and approved immemorial usages of the people for whom they were enacted.

All whom I have consulted agree that the judicial system of this country is far too complex and too cumbrous, and that taken as a whole it has been, for reasons which I have endeavoured to set forth, the least successful part of the British Administration. With a simplified system of law and procedure, a fair modicum of common sense, the love of truth and justice, sympathy with the feelings of the people, familiarity with their language, and the knowledge of a liberally instructed mind, a man would possess ample qualifications for the duties which devolve upon the judges ; in short, these are the qualifications which would best enable him to dispose of questions coming before him. It is too often forgotten that the refinements and intricacies of law belong to a more advanced state of society than exists in Egypt, and arise out of the complicated relations and transactions founded on a matured civilization. When law has become a difficult science it depends

more upon varying precedents and recondite analogies than upon express rules and clear principles of law. Law created its own uncertainty and difficulty in its progress, and at length it cannot be dispensed without a legal education and professional experience. Your aim in Egypt should be to render substantial justice by more direct and simple means. Egypt will owe little thanks to England if the increasing connexion between the two countries is to entail upon her adhesion to the refinements, the intricacy and expense of the Code Napoléon, or eventually of your British judicial methods.

One probable consequence resulting from the introduction of a less elaborate system of law and procedure would be a reduction in the number of ministerial servants. With this reduction better pay could be afforded than is now given. The present swarm of low-paid officials attached to the courts forms one of the greatest evils to which the people have been subjected. In proportion to their number and low remuneration, justice is perverted, and the people plundered. Your object should be to reduce this class numerically, to raise them in independence of circumstances, and by placing all the essential work in the hands of the judge, to destroy their opportunities

of exercising corrupt influence over the operations of the Courts.

It is not a plan of reform suggesting itself to minds unused to the people of Egypt and shaped according to what prevails in another land that is likely to benefit the native population. To recur to my early figure, the remedy must be a special one, appropriate to the particular patient to be treated, and this suitability can be judged only by those who know the patient. What may answer in Europe is not for that reason to be accepted as what may answer in Egypt. "It is vain," says Montesquieu, "to expect any good from transplanting the laws and institutions of one nation to another differing from it in race, mental and moral qualities, historical antecedents and physical condition." My aim has been to describe the symptoms of the patient to whose case we are attracting notice, as they have presented themselves to those who have cognizance of his condition and have occupied themselves about him. There can be no question that foreign treatment has generated and fomented disorders in his system, and it is these very foreign physicians who present themselves to effect his recovery by means of a fresh and undiluted flow from their laboratories. That they should be self-

confident is but natural, but, I would ask, what solid ground of confidence can the Egyptian patient have in the efficacy of their remedies? One might even, without much risk, challenge attention to their operation in their own appropriate region. Has the state of the law as dispensed in France been such as to afford satisfaction to any reasonable mind not engaged in the traffic of its subtleties? Out of that simple process by which a man may regulate his dealings in fairness with his fellow men has sprung up a system so complicated, so encompassed with ideal distinctions, factitious interests and imaginary contingencies, the whole to be veiled rather than disclosed in a mysterious flood of technicalities, that no man's rights are safe from allegation of flaw, and that no two, however honestly disposed towards each other, can of themselves, without professional aid, venture upon transactions and arrangements one with another with any prospect of security. Of the refinements which are the growth of minds bent upon overwhelming nature with science, the name is legion. The judgment of man is of course not infallible, and in proportion to the difficulties thrown in his way and in the degree that these difficulties are artificial and not of nature's moulding, will

he be liable to go wrong. With all the aim that there has been to maintain scientific consistency in judgments on the Bench of France the success has not been very remarkable. The consequence is that to go to law is to go to that the turnings and issues of which no man, often not even a lawyer, can foresee. And the result is insecurity to every contested right.

The experiment of French law has been fully tried here. Has this experiment proved beneficial to the native population ? Every witness who is not smitten with perverted vision knows that it has proved far otherwise.

To tell the unvarnished truth, the traditions of this country have been unsettled and uprooted by the ramifications of a foreign plant of ominous proportions, and the people have been overshadowed by the gloomy canopies of its extended and ponderous branches. It is therefore high time that you should set before yourselves the true principles of judicial reform, that you should undo and put aside all that may be ill-accordant with the principles above enunciated, and fortify yourselves with all that may serve to secure them and carry them out. It is only those familiar with the natives who can administer to them a fitting remedy. The shackles imposed

by a highly elaborated system of judicature which have rendered them helpless must be removed, and they must be allowed to deal with the people according to their true necessities.

## VI

## TOURISTS AND FUNCTIONARIES

**M**Y DEAR SIR,—

It is of course a subject of gratification and pride that within recent years Egypt has become what it has, namely the resort of a vast and ever increasing number of pleasure-seekers and valetudinarians whose aim it is to flee from the leaden skies of England when winter sets in. These sensitive plants of an advanced civilization have done with Italy and France, and even Algiers has begun to pall. Where then shall they go ? To our sunny Cairo. So be it. Thanks to modern enterprise, Egypt has become the winter playground of a great multitude of the representatives of the fashionable world, who find there the sunshine which is a useful accompaniment to a butterfly existence. The winter tourist has, too, in *Grand Caire* a dash maybe of archæology, a little dabbling in the mysteries of Egyptology, and before all things, plenty of life and colour. The fact

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is disheartening that he observes only that side of Egypt which the British authorities wish to meet his eyes, although surely it might have been thought that, considering his frequent visits and long sojourn in the country, he could develop a certain opinion of his own. But unfortunately he sees everything *couleur de rose*. Fascinating panegyrics are composed for his special behoof, and the tourist, as he shakes out his eulogistic London journal, or runs his paper-knife through his monthly review, finds so much praise, so much gloss and glamour, that he comes to the conclusion that nothing is wrong, and that he has been wise in the extreme to seek relaxation by the Nile. Perhaps he is not to be blamed. Moreover, he is a holiday-maker, and his normal sense of criticism is probably blunted. But all the time there is a terrible substratum of truth opposed to the varnish of first impressions, and many who settle down in our country for the winter, plunging into the giddy whirl of social festivity and sport, would feel less easy in their minds if their blissful ignorance were lessened with regard to some of the minor yet more serious facts of their daily life. Who can deny that pure food is as necessary to the invalid as the pure air he has come so far to seek ? And in spite of the

inquisition seeming trivial, I would ask what would be the feelings of our health-seeking visitors if they were to stoop, in their journeyings to and fro, to investigate for themselves the sources of their milk supply, the sheds from which it emanates, the bake-houses where the staff of life is prepared. The seeker, as he confronted what might truly be looked upon as the *foci* of disease, would be more than human if he did not suffer from a qualm.

The wealthy tourist has a *penchant* for taking sedulous care of himself ; and as he became fully aware of the insanitary matters calling for reform, he would fall to wondering—upon comparing what is waiting to be seen with the sanitary efforts of his home countries—at the supineness which sits enthroned in the seats of authority, his wonder being chiefly at the indifference of the British functionaries whose families may likely enough become the sufferers from the neglect, and that even the noble instinct of self-preservation does not awaken them from what may be termed their sleeping sickness, and galvanize them into activity. Let it be remembered in this connexion that it is as well to look sometimes beneath the surface and not to trust too blindly to a pleasing

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external appearance. And it is very certain that the British tourist, whose descent into Egypt is heralded with so much pleasure by those in authority, would make his visits like those of angels, few and far between, if he were made fully acquainted with the fact that his safety is not deemed of sufficient importance for ordinary precautions to be taken to guard the same.

One of the salient features which marks the English official commentary on the Egypt of to-day is the purblind complacency which takes all the credit to itself for the amelioration of social and general conditions in the country since the bad old days of the corvée, of rank oppression, and of national *débâcle*. It would be wise to lessen the self-confidence as to results, and to realize that though England has effected much, the general trend of international circumstances has also been largely instrumental in bringing about the change for good. It was clear that the clouds of deterioration and disaster were passing away, and that under certain auspices Egypt would have a fresh start. The shadow cast on the wall by the messenger who was coming along the road bringing help proved to be that of the portly form of John Bull ; but it might have been otherwise and the result the same. If

we trace the leading causes which have contributed to Egypt's unexampled recovery and hastened it on the way from pitiful indigence to a position of opulence, we shall certainly find that this regeneration is not alone and exclusively due to the excellence of British stewardship, which in such questionable taste is lauded to the cloudless sky of the astute Blue Book compiler. Naturally the "Occupation" has given effective guarantees for order and security, and thereby brought in foreign capital: but who ever heard till now of putting the admirable and indispensable function of a good policeman on a pedestal reserved for wonders of the world? Perhaps the blue either of the book or of the sky, or of the typical coat of the constable, has got into the smug panegyrist's eyes and confused his vision. I do not, in this, desire to underrate the priceless functions of good guardianship: the British policeman has done wonders in the land: but let there not be exaggeration. I would have you remember that Egypt would have waxed great once more quite independently of the strong hand in the woollen glove. There are two other salient factors which have helped to promote the work of reform, and which have contributed to successful enterprise—two factors which

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are rarely allowed sufficient space or consideration on the annual occasions of the casting up of the Egyptian national accounts, viz., the abounding and inexhaustible fertility of the soil, and—an equally important point—the willingness and capacity of the inhabitants to work. Given these two qualities—*vide* the case of the first of European nations, after 1870—and nothing in the wide world can stay advance. If the people had been incorrigibly lazy and indifferent to their own interests, as it pleases some misguided commentators to represent them, not all the hard dealing nor the exhaustive punishment code of the ancient taskmasters of the Israelites could have guided them into habits of industry. Clearly the raw material of Egypt, patient, active, laborious, only asking not to be oppressed, was always there; and it only required—to apply your Lord Milner's expressive phrase—English heads and Egyptian hands, to accomplish the land's transformation. Justice should be given where justice is due. Granted that the initiative and brain power have been supplied in a measure from outside, even then the inception of reforms is only one department. They have to be carried out elsewhere and by many hands, and it must always be remembered that it is

the capacity for patient, steady work and for living the life of every day, that operates more largely than any other influence in the advance of the world. It is the spirit of Egypt which has been chiefly instrumental in the progress achieved. There is a thought too much looking back and harping on the miracle which has been performed. It is not a miracle, only the result of genuine steady work, and the effect of the latter will be lessened by so much distribution of metaphorical crowns of laurel—so much self-satisfied blissful contemplation of the beauties of the scene, to the neglect of the matter-of-fact every-day requirements of a land which is now yearly inundated by another flood, foreign to the old—that is to say, the modern civilization of the West.



## VII

### INFANT MORTALITY

**M**Y DEAR SIR,—

To those who ardently long to see Egypt great and prosperous, more deeply imbued with the soundness and importance of her destiny even than is the case at the present time, the consciousness must come with peculiar sadness that there is a damaging lacuna in the ordering of the domestic life of her people. Unfortunately the brilliant searchlight of public opinion, which is the prime stimulus to reform, is often diverted by an awkward angle of gross ignorance, prejudice, carelessness, or general indifference to the subject, from an evil which may not in its present operation cause the social picture to suffer from the point of view of the superficial observer, but which none the less exists, and maybe is all the more dangerous from its sinister and hidden working. The Egyptian people are pre-eminently susceptible to teaching, as has been demonstrated times

without number during the past few decades, but the habits of centuries cannot be modified without that teaching and initiative on the part of others ; and in so far as concerns the alarming death-rate among children, and the spread of disease, how little has been done ! The British nation may glance back with justifiable pride at the great work of Lord Cromer and his coadjutors in the Administration, and reckon that the commendation accorded in that quarter has been well deserved ; but it would be a grave mistake indeed to imagine that the policy which has materially advanced Egypt's prosperity has been without flaw. The Government's neglect to grapple seriously with the housing problem by improving the homes of the poorer classes, contrasts more than unfavourably with the noble and enlightened example set by His Highness the Khedive, who, in his private capacity of careful and thoughtful land-owner, has established at Mariout an agricultural settlement against which in no sense can the reproach of being artificial be brought. It is the ideal, but with what facility could this ideal be made the reality throughout the length and breadth of the land ? It is a model village, but it is what every village in Egypt might be ; not the plaything

of a prince, but a settlement conducted on sound economic lines against which there can be no cavil, and where the first principles of hygiene are fully observed. The visitor who has trodden these village ways conjures up again a mind's-eye picture of spots which might so easily be typical of Egypt as a whole, through all the wide-spreading territories to the far south. The people are faithful, hard-working, eager to learn. For such it is worth while to strive. Instead of the squalor which characterizes so many districts, there might prevail a far different state of things, given a little interest and the friendly assistance of those who help to control the national expenditure. There is, perhaps, nothing to equal, in the world panorama, for general attractiveness and as an illustration of what life should be, the spectacle of a contented people living in comfort on the land. It is a return to the best and highest essential conceivable. And in Egypt, the land of abundance, how easily might this picture be made permanently true! But instead—death and disease! Little indeed has yet been done to improve the housing of the working classes, either in town or country. The people still live in hovels and mud huts where the most rudimentary sanitary conditions are lacking.

Then come the twin gaunt spectres of Cholera and Plague. There is nothing to thwart their march, for they are at home in squalor and in the wretched tenements in which so large a percentage of the people live. To quote from an eye-witness—" When cholera or plague breaks out a posse of police besiege the dwelling, clear away the accumulated filth of ages—which is largely located in the roof, made of dry branches and palm leaves, maize stalks, etc.—and turn out the unfortunate occupants to go Heaven knows whither ; to crawl, it may be, into other hovels still more densely crowded and possibly more noxious than those from which they have been evicted. The wailing of the women, tearing their ragged clothes and throwing dust on their heads in sign of grief, the crying of the children, and the murmuring of the men" form heart-rending scenes. Now, few things could be sadder than this page of truth, few details more sorrowful ; and this black spot on the story of contemporary Egypt undoubtedly counter-vails a vast deal that one hears of the improvement in the country. It is like the opulent city that leaves a man to starve. It is not necessary, nor profitable, to linger over the trouble of ruthless ejection, though it is bad enough. Instead it may be asked whether it is

reasonable or sound finance that large sums should be expended on the luxuries and shows of a tourist-ridden capital, when the people's prime necessities are shamefully neglected. Museums, zoological gardens and the like are all very well in their way, but surely the syenitic simulacrum of a bygone Pharaoh should not be palatially housed at the expense of sentient men and women. To put mummies and papyri in a palace, and leave living people without a roof ! Surely it would be wise to accord these interesting relics second place. We find in Egypt museums of Arabic art and of Egyptology, and at Cairo there are the Zoological Gardens where on a Sunday all the rank and fashion lionize themselves in front of that well-appointed lion house said to have cost £E4,000 ; and all this when there are myriads handicapped in life's race by poverty and all the dire concomitants of want. It is pleasanter to praise than to blame, and easier as well, but how can the observer regard but as incongruous and grotesque this costly pandering to the taste for superfluities when numbers of the population are being driven to the grave ? The spectacle does not make for equanimity. Money they talk about ! There is no money to attack adequately the housing problem,

and simultaneously the grievous death-rate, but there is cash in hand for catering for the Sunday amusement of the well-dressed mob.

It is in no spirit of harsh invective that these lines are written, but the truth in this matter is as clear as the stars ; and for short-sightedness and want of appreciation of a crying need the Government cannot stand uncondemned. For the facts are not only plain to the individual intimately associated with Egypt and Egyptian things ; they are the talk of Cairo. Have not the various points been drummed into the general understanding for years past, thanks to letters in the public press ?

In Lord Cromer's Annual Report issued last March will be found the report from Sir Horace Pinching, who writes : " The mortality in Cairo was considerably higher than in 1903. The increase was almost entirely due to a heavy mortality caused by gastro-enteritis among children during the months of April, May and June, and to a severe epidemic of measles from which 750 children died. The gastric troubles to which so many infants succumb in this country, are without doubt due to bad feeding. Children of under a year old are given unripe fruit and vegetables of all kinds to eat. The

high mortality which occurred from measles is due to the absolute want of any care or attention to children when suffering from this disease. Either from ignorance or carelessness on the part of the parents, they are allowed to wander about with the disease on them, and they invariably succumb to bronchitis or some other *sequela* of the disease. Cases of measles are never reported, and the disease is only discovered when the medical officer is called to certify to the cause of death." Comment is needless, for the facts are suggestive enough in themselves.

The late Monsieur Maxime du Camp put forward a sound article of political faith when he said, "What matter the name and style of the Government, so long as the streets are clean?" It is common sense. Take it figuratively. Good citizenship is seldom an accompaniment of faulty drainage; and a policy of letting things slide in regard to all those commonplace essentials of health which are taken for granted elsewhere must lead to disaster. The observer, in fact, stands amazed at the astounding and deplorable little which it has been thought necessary to do since the agitation on this subject first made itself heard. Sounding phrases in an Annual Report will not meet the case, nor

will a generous application of what may be termed statistical gloss. Moreover, official recognition of mischievous sanitary methods, or want of method, should assuredly be the prelude of a thorough overhauling of that system, or non-system, which permits these evils to exist. And with these considerations kept in view it would certainly be wise to exert every influence towards the introduction of a new and kindlier order of things, especially as regards this terrible death-rate among children. The danger is to be met by (a) improved habitations, (b) instruction and supervision in matters of health and dietary, (c) the exercise of efficient control over the food supply. Those few who look beyond the outer circle of a country's welfare—alas ! these are but a few—will naturally ask why a matter of such importance should have been relegated to the shadowy Hinterland of those duties which are postponed till to-morrow. It has apparently been worth no one's while to take immediate action. Yet it is no new discovery. Several investigators have pointed out the fatal state of things. Approximately one-third of the deaths are of children under one year, another third of children from one to five years. Why has not the subject been given the attention it called for ? Why has

it not been effectively taken in hand ? Indubitably the plaint of Egypt's young is one which should be heard, and that it has not yet been fully answered gives cause for much anxious thought. In the evil to which reference is here made lies the explanation for a certain failure in Egypt to be laid at England's door : the presence of unrectified evils lying just beneath the surface. The subject is irresistibly urgent on those who aim at improvement and who are never satisfied until reform is under weigh, for with these the amelioration of the lot of the poor is ever near to the heart. And the native Egyptian is born to be happy. He does not now feel that he is a captive condemned all the days of his life to a monotonous round of toil. On the contrary, in the vast field of the working sphere he offers a sublime figure of philosophic resignation ; he plays his part, and plays it well. But do those in whose particular charge are the destinies of his country play theirs as efficiently ? The answer is, No. A better inspired policy would spend available money on such crying needs as sanitation, which has been looked upon as a *quantité négligeable* for so long, a drab-tinted Cinderella of a subject to be left alone, rather than on luxurious appointments to an artistic civic life.

These show-places are admirable adjuncts, but they do not by any means form the foundations of a well-ordered society, nor should their establishment have first pull at the public purse-strings. Money is not to be found, we shall be told. Well, no man is to be blamed for not spending what he does not possess. As with an individual, so with a nation. It is the circumstance of neglect, allied to a cold aloofness when any essentially native question comes uppermost, that marks a blemish upon the picture of a united, a strong and a prosperous Egypt, an Egypt of work and plenty, of sunshine and of peace. Facts can generally be left to speak for themselves, and here we have an imposing array of fateful statistics which tell a melancholy story with dramatic emphasis—and all because no one has troubled to inaugurate a better system of sanitation, to carry a step further the education of a people in the simple essentials of living. It is necessary to fight the dark ignorance which prevails as to the treatment of disease, with a whole-heartedness which should take into account the habits and long-established customs of the people. It is infinitely important to promote to the utmost a thorough understanding of the elementary principles of hygiene;

but much knowledge would obviously be of little avail so long as milk and butter—to mention only two articles of food—are, as at present, allowed to be sold throughout the country in an adulterated and unsound condition. Are we to wait for reform till some new Peter comes forth from his hermitage to preach a fresh crusade? Must it be that? Can we not act without? The thought alone should suffice. Children are sacrificed by the thousand, first to the ignorance existing in their immediate environment, and in the second place to the complacent supineness of those who might with sincere single-minded endeavour sweep away this ugly blot on the life of the Egypt of to-day. The intense gravity of this matter is beyond all question. Those who in the smallest particular may be reckoned as answerable for the lack of direct initiative in reform, incur a heavy responsibility. There must be no more of this putting on one side the claim of the children. At the same time we may hope for a change in a policy which inspires a wilful disregard of the characteristics of the race. We have to remember that the cold formality, the smooth, well-trimmed diction, or phrase manufacturing, with the attendant glacial reserve, admirably adapted

as they may be in certain fields of debate, are worse than valueless here. Nothing good ever came from disdainful aloofness. Be it remembered that you are dealing with an emotional race, expansive, warm-hearted when in congenial surroundings, and of that mercurial temperament which shrinks within itself when faced with frigid officialism and alien views of life. Here, then, lies the trouble—lack of genuine sympathy and the absence of the wish to comprehend. The looker-on realizes to his chagrin that a great opportunity for lasting good is being missed, and that a people who are thoroughly cognizant of the beneficial results of English influence, and who are ready to reciprocate any manifestation of kindly feeling, are repelled by the blundering method, the dull formalism which refuses to take into account the under-thought and the aspiration of the race. Of course the visitor in Cairo, the chance tourist, even he who goes right up the Nile, knows and sees nothing of all this. It is the long resident in the country, the keen observer, who alone can pierce the veil, and who perceives this saddening lack of considerateness, almost of common humanity, in the dealings of the Excellencies of officialdom with the people.

There is an intimate alliance between the

two heads of the subject. The fact is before us in black and white, that the death-rate in Alexandria and Cairo, according to the latest returns, stands at 34·9 and 37·7 per thousand—a rate that, excepting Bombay, exceeds that of any cities with the statistics of which we are acquainted, and admittedly swollen by the excessive number of deaths among children. There are the statistics, and bad enough they are. Why should it be so? Why should these children die? The terrible percentage of mortality would be appalling under any circumstances, but here there is no need. Better housing, and systematic observance of the laws of health, would work wonders.

At the commencement of the present year a strongly-worded weighty letter appeared in an Egyptian paper, in which the writer said: "I hold it to be the paramount duty of the Government forthwith to investigate the causes contributing to this terrible waste of human life, and having ascertained them, to devise effective measures for arresting the shocking ravages death is making among the infant population."

Facts such as those enumerated require but little more than their bare recital. One may opine that it is not asking overmuch of

those whom Fate has cast in the upper ways of the Council Chamber and the Cabinet to take earnest heed of these statements, great of import as they are. In days past the subordination of matters of lesser moment than this has been the means of preventing a *régime* from rising to its fullest sense of power and to the achievement of a triumphant end. One sees these failures in the retrospect of the lives of nations.

Is it that the point raised here is regarded as too little—as no vast matter of State on which hinge the nice destinies of political strategy—as nothing to cause the flutter of a Blue Book, or to stimulate heated argument till midnight in the clubs of Europe—as no immense policy which sets the international cables busy? Maybe the explanation is there. It is merely a plea for earnest thought, zealous work, the introduction of more sympathy in every dealing with the natives, kindness of treatment, and the exhibition of a sincere wish to make them your friends. Admirable would be the quickly accruing result. There is no one more receptive to kindness, to fellow feeling, than the patient toiler of the desert, whom one sees, bent of back, in the mind's-eye vision of old Egypt. It needs no subtle-brained psychologist to

understand him ; but it does require the aid of the former to comprehend the state of mind of the case-hardened official who at times seems to regard this patient lovable people as a species of rather indifferent automata, a race existing simply for the purpose of being experimented upon by new regulations and by barely understood laws.

Now, these things are known, and known more fully at the present moment than ever they were before ; and it is not for those in authority, those who can take initiative in this matter, to hasten their steps and pass on, as if the life of diplomacy or of politics were but as a visit to a national treasure-house where the smaller exhibits can be left quickly with a shrug of the shoulders, in favour of the apparently more important show-cases. In a country which is not actually engaged in the arbitrament of war, a country where conditions are peculiarly favourable to advance in the arts of peace, there is really nothing which need take precedence of the welfare and protection of the generation which one day will carry on the work of the world. To the observer who pauses on the threshold of old Egypt, with its chequered past, it is as if the land which under the present Khedive has found its spirit of nationality once again were

pitifully appealing to those who have the power. Must it appeal in vain? The critic may advance the theory that no law, no many-articled charter, no majestic work of grand philanthropy, can achieve reform here, for that it rests with the individual to care for those whose advent makes for the power of the State. But the answer to that thesis is that the lack of education is to blame. The authorities who control the sources of education, with all its potentialities for good, have not done their part. They have not sufficiently enforced the old dictum of Lord Palmerston, who, when cholera ravaged Scotland, brushed aside the passive teaching of the clergy. "God rules the world by natural laws," he said. "The weal or woe of mankind depends upon the observance of those laws." The plain duty was to destroy the cause of the disease by improving the abodes of the poor, inculcating and enforcing the principles of hygiene and sanitation, and seeing that the supply of aliments sold in shops and markets is wholesome.

## VIII

### FAULTY FINANCE

**M**Y DEAR SIR,—

There is no denying that in our larger towns we live in open war with hygienic conditions, and in disaccord with the first principles of sanitation. The mere existence of a road with a pavement on either side is no proof that the requirements of the community are well looked after, any more than, as has been said, a steam engine and a railway train are proofs of real civilization. But how often it is the case in Europe that a strip of pavement is allowed to cover everything ; imagination will do the rest. The town looks all that could be desired to the chance traveller entering it some early morning time—one knows well the bright picture replete with colour and brilliant effect—but to the sojourner, to the keen observer who has the true *flair* for abuses, to all in short who do not live merely in the superficial, the evil is apparent enough. Insanitary dwellings are not responsible for death alone. Their exist-

ence is a menace to all, occasioning as they do widespread mischief, sowing the seeds of incurable disease ; to them must be traced radical and permanent injury to the living, and the deterioration of the race as seen in rickety and feeble-minded children.

How long will it be before mere showy externals are placed as they should be second in importance to the vital considerations of light and ventilation ? Landlords are ever bent on economizing space in order to pile up profits. Architects and builders of a bygone age troubled themselves nothing about such questions ; but time should have brought a change. There is an awakening, it is true ; and the planning of garden cities in England and America shows that a certain advance has been made ; but how slow is it ! A glance at Germany is sufficient indication of how far we are behind. She is in the van in hygienic as well as in many another reform. Something has been done by imitating Algerian houses with ample roof accommodation for all the occupants of a teeming tenement ; these houses are admirable, for according to the hour of the day and the season of the year the residents are provided with the advantages of air baths, light, sun and coolness, and that without increase of rent. Upon these roomy

terraces children can play whilst their parents take their rest or attend to their occupations. These houses are seemingly the work of philanthropic pioneers. But why should not this example be followed in Egypt ? Is it too much to ask ? From filthy hovels and squalid mud huts to the enviable condition of things architectural just touched upon is indeed a far cry.

The answer is nevertheless that it is not too much to demand. The regenerator of the Egyptian dwelling-place, the individual who strikes out boldly for reform, has yet to appear ; but some day he will, beyond doubt ; and no matter whence he comes so long as he comes prepared.

For there is money in abundance to start this work. Some of the existing expenditure could without loss be wiped off in the interests of the greater cause. Look, for example, at the costly superfluities which are so lavishly supported. They are described in full with touching detail in the official records, and to read them with, at the same time the consciousness of evils unremedied, aye, even unthought of, produces a feeling of impatience akin to that which the outsider would experience if a doctor in charge of an urgent case turned his back on the unlucky patient, and plunged into a long discourse on ethics.

It will have been noted that in Lord Cromer's Annual Report for 1904 credit is taken for the expenditure by the Egyptian Government upon works of art and archæology, though it is admitted that the vast majority of tax-payers are not sufficiently advanced upon the road of intellectual progress to take any genuine interest in these matters. During the last ten years £E115,000 has been spent on the Archæological Department. A museum has been constructed at a cost of £E251,000, and about £E14,000 has been granted for making a very elaborate catalogue. £E12,000 has been spent at Karnak; £E13,000 at Philæ; and £E1,500 at Edfou, in restoring and preserving the ancient monuments at those places. During the same period £E82,000 has been spent on the preservation of Arab and Coptic monuments. A Museum of Arab Art, which also comprises a library, has been constructed at a cost of £E58,000. The library receives an annual grant of £E4,500 from the Government, and of £E500 from the Wakf Administration. It contains a numismatic collection, the nucleus of which was purchased in 1884 for £E4,000. The Græco-Roman Museum at Alexandria cost £E10,000, and requires an annual £E1,200. A Geological Survey will have cost at the end of the

current year more than £E15,000, and a Geological Museum is being built. An Observatory equipped with all the most modern instruments necessary for meteorological and seismological observations has been raised at Helouan. Other items include £E5,000 for Scientific Research and £E7,400 for the Cairo Zoological Gardens, with £E4,300 for upkeep of same. The Aquarium at Ghezireh cost £E1,150. There is also a trifle of £E3,600 for scientifically investigating the life of Nile fish and other matters. With all deference it may be held that so considerable an expenditure at the present time, with so many pressing needs unnoticed, is unjustifiable. Before the desire for art begins to manifest itself amongst a race, certain other preliminary yearnings make themselves felt. The people in general have not as yet exhibited any unanimous craving for such preliminary wants. I allude, of course, to hygiene, cleanliness, orderliness and self-respect. The art gallery must follow these, not precede them. That a person should first have a care for personal cleanliness ; that he should regard his health and general well-being ; that he should fear alcohol and love baths ; that he should evince repugnance at seeing his abode dirty and disorderly ; that he should seek

quietude and exhibit self-control—these are the signs and symptoms which indicate that the ground for Art is being prepared. No one can be brought into direct contact with Art to his own advantage before passing through the psychological stages by which that goal is reached ; and those stages are traced on the moral plane rather than on the æsthetic. Before opening museums to the people and introducing them to guide-books, much needs to be done ; a preliminary training must be given to them whereby they are made to understand and acknowledge that Art is superior hygiene, a supreme rectitude of the individual. Who teaches them that lesson ? No one. Such being the case, they do not hunger after the opening of instructive institutions. No impatient waiting. They have not felt the need of these adjuncts, and those who build for them costly art temples are offering them stones instead of bread. Before giving people Art, or granting them access to or usage of the same, it is essential to awaken in them the desire for it. How is this to be accomplished ? Surely by fighting to the death the misery and ugliness which, alas ! figure so largely in the environment of our people. Bring them to desire hygiene, and in so doing suppress the crude hideousness

of their lives. Prepare the way first. Form the character of a people, and then at the right time usher in all these artistic accessories. Dismissed for ever should be the delusion that all that requires to be done is to throw open a few art galleries and archæological museums, and sell nicely printed catalogues at the door.

Excessive infant mortality has in the official view nothing whatever to do with unwholesome dwellings and other insanitary conditions, such as the "birkas" or stagnant pools to be found in almost every village in Egypt, which play a general utility part, being used indiscriminately for bathing, washing animals and clothes, and maybe even for drinking purposes. But let me be quite fair. The Government has just issued a decree obliging owners to fill up these foul pools within the space of three years. Unfortunately there is every reason to believe that this law, as is so frequently the case with laws, will be disregarded. With respect to the terrible sacrifice of life, however, the official mind is made up, and apparently nothing can affect that massive compound of dull determination. In its view, the increase of the infant death-rate is solely occasioned by improper feeding. With regard

to this point might I meekly inquire, if mothers have not changed and will not change their vicious habits, why the *increase*? Does the Director-General of the Sanitary Department hold with others that if more infants were preserved there would be a danger of over-population, forgetful of the Soudan—as large as Europe—which at present contains only one and three-quarter millions of inhabitants—a population moreover which according to Lord Cromer's estimate is not likely of itself to show any marked increase for many years to come? It is a mischievous theory which should be driven from hiding-place to hiding-place until it is finally destroyed. To what myriad evils and abuses does not even the tacit acceptance of such a notion lead!

There is another consideration with regard to the cynical argument about over-population. "The survival of the fittest" is a cruel theory now. Have we lived in vain? Are the old beliefs and ideas at their worst to linger yet? With a barbarous people in ancient days this may have been held to be a natural law, but under enlightened and civilized conditions it should be reduced to a minimum. The great object of civilization is surely to remedy and soften down every-

thing which militates against the health and happiness of the existing race. The gross inconsistency indicated is oppressive to the understanding, and the theory is so much opposed to the sentiments of Europe whichever way the eye is turned, that it is difficult to conceive how it has been permitted even a brief ascendancy. It is not assuredly with an underlying belief of this description that great things can come to pass, and one can only denounce it as almost a crime.

It is of the essence of good government to keep to the principle of the "open door," not in the sense of the much abused popular term, but as a free ingress for reform and change. The weak administration falls into more errors in proving that it has never made one, than are ever committed by a strong *régime* which is not above confessing a mistake, and which recognizes and associates itself with reform. If our authorities in Egypt would be more elastic in their dealings, a little less rigorous in their proud sense of omniscience, how much more easily and smoothly the chariot of State would travel ! Firmness is one thing, but an unbending resolution and continuance in false deduction, because that deduction has once been dignified by official acceptance, is quite another.

Egypt has started some strange problems of late. Officialism having assumed one attitude is frankly puzzled. Of course the facts have in some way, at the cost of truth, of common sense, no matter how, to be made to square with its convictions. Touching, for example, that extraordinary conjunction of prosperity and crime, officialism had a hard task here to meet the grim logic of facts. Surely the baffled bureaucrat would gain more in the long run by frankly acknowledging that he has taken up an untenable position, than by ingloriously holding out in his self-created solitude and trying to snatch victory by means of arbitrary assertion.

To the strange picture of a striving to account for an increase in crime must now be added another curiosity, namely, the spread of tuberculosis—a malady almost unknown in former times amongst the native population—and this in spite of the rise in the standard of living due to the much vaunted increase of wealth, which does not unfortunately connote a corresponding improvement in well-being. One of the most eminent of British medical authorities upon this subject, Sir William Broadbent, has recently stated that “the great causes of tubercular disease are unwholesome houses, over-crowding,

improper feeding, dirt, bad ventilation and the incidents of poverty generally." The disease, as might have been expected, is worse in the towns where the congestion is greatest, the pure air of the country acting to some extent as a disinfectant. But neither in town nor in country have any such steps been taken as are alone capable of checking the ravages of the disease. Doubtless the increases of crime and vice and disease are directly attributable to one and the same cause—the neglect to secure to the peasantry and workers in the towns wholesome habitations, and the colossal failure to put in operation the fundamental principles of hygiene.

What can be known of these things by the superficial observer—the holiday-maker strolling through the bazaars? The canker is deep. So many have judged alone from the splendour around. The satisfaction experienced in the material prosperity brought about by British influence is lessened by the growing conviction that the new order of things has been unaccompanied by those essential safeguards of advancing civilization which inculcate the duties of good citizenship. A system which neglects such considerations as these, which takes no thought of the fundamental principle of genuine national prosperity, proves not a blessing but a bane.



## IX

### URBAN REFORM

**M**Y DEAR SIR,—

The man who would do real good in Cairo, the home of close upon 700,000 inhabitants, would be he who instituted reform in the housing of the working classes. Here practically everything requires to be done. The crying need of reform is made more urgent by the circumstances that the method of building now will render it far more difficult at a later stage. This is manifest. It is easy in Cairo to point out houses that call for only one thing—destruction, swift and sure—insanitary hovels which are a disgrace and an insult to our civilization. Meanwhile the builder of houses made to sell but not to live in, the bad builder, the man of cheap expedients, goes his way unchecked. There are miles and miles of streets in the Mousky Quarter—“the dear old Mousky,” as tourists thoughtlessly call it—and elsewhere, where two moderately sized vehicles cannot pass each other. The whole district

is a hotbed of dirt and disease. Old it may be ; dear it is not—at least to those to whom human lives are worth considering. It is very interesting, doubtless, to see these quarters of the busy city ; and that they are picturesque nobody will deny, for the brilliant sunshine of the Orient lights up the devious ways, the multi-coloured houses which are of all kinds and sizes, splendidly irregular in form, and more often than not archaic in design. But alas ! Life is not for the picturesque but for the practical, and the snapshotting tourist with his Kodak at the present, or the artist with a love of colour in his soul and the blurred memory of the Arabian Nights and the Calendars and garrulous barbers in his mind, has unfortunately merely seen the surface, the more or less attractive outside of the subject. They pass through and are charmed ; but the thoughtful inquirer sees more and is less fettered by the impression of Oriental glamour. True, the Government can scarcely be blamed for not having introduced the Garden City, for the system of urban life represented by that term is as yet only in its infancy, and maybe it is too early to recommend the establishment of the roof garden as in Algiers ; it is private initiative which must take these matters in hand. Yet

there is much that might have been done, and which might be done now—the checking, for example, of that mischief-making entity, the cheap builder. Public-spirited action would soon make him mend his ways. What has he been doing in Cairo ? Well, practically anything he likes. Inferior work, the destruction of what was valuable, and in its place the shoddy tenements which are being run up by the hundred. That is the story. Surely the question of the preservation of open spaces could have been seriously taken in hand. There is still time—time to prevent the rushing up of more badly built houses on garden land, and to make a firm stand against the erection of tenement houses in even the most fashionable quarters of the principal towns. The pity is the shortsightedness which allows this Vandalism to go on its triumphant way. The Vandal may do excellent work, with the accent on the *may*, if it were a mushroom city which was required ; but here it is otherwise, and yet public action is a silent and apparently an approving factor. It is nobody's business to interfere, so let things turn out as they will. And assuredly they will turn out badly in the end. Then there will be regret, but then, too, will the vested interest in new and insanitary dwellings be an agent

to thwart reform. They might learn in Egypt from the failures elsewhere, or the absence of method in the past which makes the task of undoing bad work and inaugurating reform such a difficulty-beset labour, a matter of years and ever-receding years. Why should not the Government follow the example set by Bombay, for example, and compel landlords to provide better constructed and better ventilated houses, the principles of light and air and sanitation being kept in view ? The force which is at work in Cairo might, properly directed, create a capital city which would be a model for the world, but the time is passing swiftly ; soon it will be too late, and the myriad converging interests, the hedge of new monopolies—this builder on one side, that purveyor of traction, etc., etc., on another, and all the rest with their self-constituted and irregular policies, will have made of the city a pile of insanitary incongruity. Houses raised to five, six, and even seven storeys high, the wholesale destruction of trees, and a still tolerated system of refuse collection which will only find its parallel in some forgotten corner of mediæval times—such is the tale.

With regard to the trees. It is an elementary fact that they are necessary, and yet

what does one find ? Merely wholesale destruction of them for the sake of tramway lines. An intrusive tram line can go round, but a tree is gone for ever. Nothing is too severe for the wilful destroyer of trees, trees with their heaven-sent grateful shade which makes the thoroughfares of a parched city pleasant for the wayfarer. But they are ruthlessly cut down, and in Cairo above all places—Cairo which should set the example in arboriculture as in other things. Smaller cities may well argue that what is permissible there is good too for them. Again, touching the footpaths, so essential for divers reasons in an Eastern city : those who know Cairo know well that the portion of the roadways reserved for pedestrians was none too wide ; but still one of the main thoroughfares has been utterly disfigured, namely, the Kasr el Aini Boulevard. The footway here was broad and shaded with trees. All that has gone. It is now barely four feet wide, and the trees have been taken away, an action which stands out like an ugly, black silhouette of criminal incompetence, ineptitude and folly, knowing as one does the tropical heat of Cairo during many months in the year. But this is really the root-matter of one of the most dangerous influences of the age—

destruction without substitution ; though of course it is here merely a question of trees, and who can replace them ? It would clearly be labour in vain to plead for something which is 'gone, were it not for the thought that maybe every word of protest will aid in the preservation of the trees which still remain. You have a saying in English, " Half a loaf is better than no bread," and a footpath which your London Traffic Commission would condemn as wholly inadequate is more acceptable than the total absence of one along the fashionable Ghezireh drive, where, as elsewhere, the people who cannot afford to ride are compelled to walk in the road, and are thus frequently run down, crushed and killed by motor fiends and the racing trotters of the marble-hearted rich.

It is the commonest thing to see building material lying about in loose heaps, completely blocking the footways and often extending to the middle of the road, to the great danger of pedestrians and animals, especially at night, owing to the insufficient lighting of the streets. Yet the authorities do nothing. On the contrary I have seen it stated that the Government makes money out of the builders by charging them a rental for obstructing the public thoroughfare, just as

is the case with the cafés all over the town.

Furthermore, so indifferently do the Inspectors of Buildings discharge the duty of supervision that hardly a week passes but one hears of houses in the poorer districts tumbling down and oftentimes burying the inhabitants in their ruins.

With regard to working-class dwelling-houses, the observer may well ask how it is that the municipalities of Alexandria and Tanta, to name only two, have not been compelled to erect suitable houses in place of the hopeless disease-inhabited hovels which at present exist. In Cairo there is no municipality to exhibit stolid inaction and inefficiency ; but here the Government might well take the work in hand itself, at any rate so far as the accommodation of its own employees is concerned. The city will also want its open spaces some day, but then it will be too late.

And so we go on. It is difficult to give even an approximate idea of the insanitary condition of Cairo. Nobody could realize it. It beggars description. Of the 2,842,534 square metres which form the area of Cairo's road surface only 176 are at present macadamized or paved. There are numberless streets where

there are no footways and no macadamized roads, and where the rain will lie for weeks, the mud churned up by axle-deep cart wheels, and the atmosphere charged with death-dealing miasmas. This is where the poor live. Supineness is the order when a question affecting Egypt's lower classes comes up for treatment. Of course it is not important, but maybe the reflection will come at last that there is scope here for reform. Still, the picture is not yet complete. The houses are high, very high, and the street is partially covered over by boarding from the roofs. Well, after all, hardy people can live without fresh air ! But here, too, is my Alma Mater, the Al Azhar University, and in such surroundings its ten to eleven thousand *alumni* pass their lives ; and it is a fact that in this district the diseases more especially superinduced by filth—diphtheria, typhus, typhoid, dysentery and diarrhoea—carry off their victims wholesale. “Fanciful, grossly exaggerated,” some will say. Really ? Look at the figures just published by the Sanitary Department. They are a year or so late, as most things are in this country. Here are some for the year 1904. They represent the cases of infectious diseases *notified*, which does not of course amount to a tithe of the

real number. Of the 1,085 deaths from exanthematic typhus occurring throughout the whole of Egypt more than half (593) took place in Cairo. Typhoid fever was responsible for 491 deaths, 172 of which occurred in Cairo. Out of 586 fatal cases of diphtheria for all Egypt, no less than 374 happened in Cairo ; and so on, and so on. Statistics are tiresome ; it is unnecessary to proceed with them further.

Diphtheria has its firm hold too in the new buildings of Cairo's fashionable quarter, and who can wonder at it ? This is the quarter where rents are anything from £150 to £300 and £400 a year. These, however, do not include anything so negligible and insignificant as simple sanitation. It is not. In the best quarter of Cairo the history of one cesspool is neglect for three years, but it is not a three years' system ; there is nothing so reliable and regular as that. Four families live in the house—flats on the usual method—and the Sanitary Department returned no answer to a complaint for a lengthy period, and finally the Inspector who inquired into the matter considered that the subject might well be left standing for another year !

But it is enough ! The miasma of cruel indifference to crying needs is the cause. You

may take a sanitary inspector to an abuse many years old, but nothing will make him move in the matter, secure as he is in the knowledge that behind him is a complacent do-nothing department whose nerves must not be shocked by crude suggestions of drastic reform. But the waking up must come. The Augean Stable must be cleansed. How long need it be first? If the broom has to sweep away a whole coterie of officials before it can do its work, well, so much the worse for the coterie; but the reform must come, for in its absence the people die.

Precaution against fire; what of that? Well, the authorities deserve credit for their new central fire station and spick and span engines, though I could wish to see a little straw for the poor horses to lie down upon. But is that one station enough for the safety of so straggling a city as Cairo, with its 700,000 inhabitants, or thereabouts? I submit it is not, and I dread to think of the frightful amount of loss of life that would ensue in case of a serious fire breaking out in so densely crowded a quarter as the "dear old" Mousky. Thousands for a certainty would perish in the flames, for though fire engines might get there, where the width of the thoroughfare permitted, where are the

hydrants ? Where are the fire-escapes that will reach seven storeys high ?

Speaking of fire reminds me that Cairo is probably the worst lighted city in the civilized world. And why ? The answer is that street illumination is a monopoly owned by a company paying handsome dividends, and the Government has a very tender regard for monopolists—witness that till recently owned by the Salt and Soda Company. In the Report of the Public Works Department for 1904—the latest to hand—it is admitted that we have hardly half the number of lamps required for the effective lighting of the city. The lamps are much too far apart ; the quality of the gas is miserably poor ; and only one side of the thoroughfare is lighted on nights when the moon's appearance is anticipated.

Just a word about the Cairo Water Company. That, too, owns a monopoly. It is probably the richest company in all Egypt. Yet it not infrequently happens that during a spell of hot weather, and on days which are particularly sultry, there is a water famine. People are constantly complaining that the pressure at the mains is not sufficient to provide a constant supply on the second and third storeys. Think, then, if a fire were to occur in one of our newly erected tenement

houses of gigantic height, how those living on the top floors would fare.

Of the dust in the native quarters a sad story might be told. It brings ophthalmia, which is tragically frequent in Egypt. The fact is as plain as the fierce light of the African sun. Inhabitants make feeble efforts to lay the dust by throwing water on it—a costly expedient, for the water has to be purchased—while the result is merely to make the roadways sticky—and Cairo mud is peculiarly sticky—and dangerous ; but there are economical souls who do not buy *aqua pura* for this purpose, a fact which opens up a whole range of unwelcome possibilities for the passer-by. Facts such as these engender impatience in the soul of the listener to platitudes of praise for everything in Egypt. With regard to the refuse of houses, it, too, goes out into the street for the carts to take away. There are no dust-bins. These receptacles are a luxury forbidden. With the sewerage it is the same—I have seen it deposited on the side of the road, and that, too, in one of the principal thoroughfares inside Cairo itself. The administrative apathy and neglect which prevail in the capital are, you may be sure, a thousand times worse in the smaller towns and villages.

That section of the central administration which permits such things makes its own inadequacy clear, and calls for radical reform. To advance the theory that improved hygiene is impossible because of the dirty habits of the natives is merely a contemptible subterfuge. With the discouraging example of Alexandria before us, the demand for a municipality for Cairo does not find much popular support, though a worse state of affairs than I have shown to exist would be difficult to conceive.

I cannot close this letter without a brief allusion to the moral purification of which Cairo and Alexandria, like other towns of Egypt, stand so urgently in need. Moral turpitude of the most degraded description stalks in this city naked and unashamed in the noon-day sun. Lest it be thought that I am exaggerating, I call to witness one whose testimony will be accepted by you in England as unimpeachable. Bishop Blyth, not long ago, characterized Cairo as "the grave of the soul." What stronger corroboration of my assertion could I wish ?

To oft-repeated complaints and remonstrances the authorities merely shrug their shoulders, uttering a *non-possumus* based upon the ground that the majority of offenders are

of foreign nationality and therefore protected by the Capitulations. It has become, of late especially, the fashion to attribute the origin and continuance of our social evils to these Capitulations. They form, indeed, a convenient cloak of ample folds to conceal official short-comings. A remedy—partial in extent, I admit, but efficacious within certain limits—lies ready to hand if the Government would but put it in force. Let there be issued a Khedivial decree expropriating for public purposes certain notorious quarters which I need not more definitely particularize, and let there be built upon the land thus acquired, workhouses, infirmaries, almshouses for the aged, asylums for waifs and strays, in default of more eligible sites, and dwellings for the industrial classes. If that plan were adopted the principal plague spots of human depravity would be removed from our midst. Furthermore as a precautionary measure the passing and strict enforcement of an Aliens Law on some such lines as that which obtains in England or America, would prove of incalculable benefit in keeping out of this country undesirable Levantines and the “dregs of Athens and of Rome” that flock to it in such vast numbers.

## X

### POOR RELIEF

**M**Y DEAR SIR,—

Lord Milner christened Egypt the Land of Paradox, and assuredly no country ever more truly merited that epithet in respect to the treatment of public affairs. One stumbles upon paradoxes in every direction, but it is perhaps in the domain of justice, social and criminal, that they seem the most frequently to jostle one another. An example will at once make my meaning clear. If an Egyptian be hungry, roofless and wanting in raiment to keep out the cold—for it can be cold even in Egypt, as the sables of the rich dames and the fur coats of well-to-do men testify—the Government will do nothing for him, no, not even if he be a confirmed invalid, a helpless cripple, or too young or too old to gain his livelihood. The above statement is a little too sweeping. The Government will do nothing for him so long as he is not guilty of an offence punishable by law. He must first commit a crime, and then, and

then only, will the State interest itself in his behalf. When it is a young boy or girl, the offender will, if there is room, be sent to a reformatory. I say "if there is room," because the boys' reformatory provides for about three hundred inmates only, and as to the girls'—well, of that I am not quite certain, as it was only decided last December to build one for them, and matters of this kind move slowly in Egypt—probably about the same number. When it is a "grown-up" who is the offender, his needs will be attended to in prison. Although according to Mussulman law the duty of father and son as regards maintenance is reciprocal, I have never known an instance of its enforcement; and as it so frequently happens that the whole family is destitute, such law must inevitably remain a dead-letter. Hence we see even in our opulent capital, Cairo, children, half-clad and desperately hungry, roaming the streets at all hours of the day and night and fighting with the pariah dogs for the garbage thrown out of the houses for removal by the dust-carts. Our streets are so infested also with beggars and cripples that ladies hardly dare venture out alone for fear of their importunate molestation.

And yet there are cynical observers amongst

the governing class who apathetically remark that no one in Egypt ever dies of hunger. It may be that, "to save their face," such cases are not recorded by the newly established statistical bureau. But what dispassionate observer can doubt that the want of sufficient and proper food is having widespread and disastrous results upon the race? And unhappily it is not food alone that is wanting. Exposure to the cold, even in this land blessed by the sun, is answerable, especially in the case of these underfed unfortunates, for many a malignant disease which cuts short the lives of the youthful and the aged, even where those of middle age can withstand such preventible hardships. That indigence is more widespread in Egypt than in some European countries I will not venture to assert, but of the statement that such poverty is mainly due to preventible causes I could furnish abundant and convincing proof.

Now, what should be done? We have the example of England before us, where a poor law exists which, though admittedly far from perfect, has for centuries embodied the principle that it is the absolute and positive duty of the State to make provision for the poor. France too, I learn, has during the current year passed a law with a similar

object. Why should not such duty be acknowledged, and a system in conformity with its recognition be adopted in Egypt, where the British authorities are anxious to introduce Western institutions wherever practicable ?

The official answer was given on August 5, 1904, in the British House of Commons. Lord Cromer reported that the Mussulman religious " foundations in Egypt dispose of considerable revenues for the maintenance of the poor and aged, and large sums are granted yearly by the Mussulman Benevolent Society. There is also a foundling home which receives children irrespective of creed, and the various religious communities have funds devoted to the relief of the poor. There is, at present, no need of any further institutions of this character."

With all due respect for the judgment of so high an authority, I venture to say that had his lordship studied this subject dispassionately in all its bearings, he would have arrived at an opposite conclusion. To take a single instance in support of my contention, the total distribution of alms by the Mohammedan Benevolent Society, which is the only institution of the kind in Egypt, amounted this year to £E250 ! Where distress is so widespread amongst the native population of eleven

millions, is not such an amount a mere drop in the sea ?

The relief of the poor is not a favour that is asked : it is *a right that is claimed*.

No State is well organized where the poor are wholly dependent upon private charity, seeing that private charity is incapable of dealing systematically with the necessitous poor. Left to the sympathy of the benevolent, this form of relief is no remedy against pauperism. For that purpose it is far too precarious. Charity is of course a duty, but a duty enforced only by a moral sanction ; a duty, besides, quite indefinite in its amount, its scope and operation—a duty which may be observed or disregarded without fear of incurring any serious consequences. How many are there who entirely neglect it, whilst others perform it in an inadequate, indifferent and negligent manner—giving parsimoniously where they should give liberally, or bestowing their bounty without thought or inquiry, upon wholly unworthy objects ? Even when well organized, charitable institutions supported by voluntary contributions fail to deal adequately with genuine poverty, by reason of the meagreness of their resources and the irregularity both in period and amount of the funds placed at their disposal. Private benevolence must

for these reasons ever preserve the character of empiricism. It may in some instances, but only partially, allay the symptoms of the disease, but can never hope to reach its causes. Such benevolence, being left to the will of the individual, is blind, capricious and unreasoning in the objects of its bounty. It is the purest chance, like the fall of dice, which decides the giving of alms, and more often it is the sturdy importunate beggar rather than the unfortunate victim of circumstance who is the recipient. The promiscuity of its distribution is one of its chief imperfections. How rarely does it help the poor to help themselves! Of what use is the little coin dropped by a passer-by into the hand of the unemployed workman? Sometimes, through the carelessness with which it is given, it defeats its own end and becomes an instrument of, or an aid to, vice and idleness. In the majority of cases it no more profits the recipient than the gambler's hoard which is dissipated as lightly as it is gained. Furthermore, the hap-hazard method of doling out benefactions tends, when it does not humiliate, to degrade, seeing that it undermines the spirit of self-reliance, engenders a habit of counting upon chance, and conduces to laziness and servility. It is in effect demoralizing, and thus aggravates

the evil it seeks to diminish, by letting loose the plague of mendicancy.

It is not necessary to pursue in all their ramifications the abuses to which private charity is liable, or all the vices of which it is the veil. Though not an evil in itself, it not infrequently conduces to evil, and is generally ineffective in its endeavours to combat the misfortunes which dog the footsteps of the poor. Even in those countries where well organized public charities exist, they have proved themselves an utterly inadequate remedy for pauperism in all its phases.

There is indeed but one efficacious remedy, and that is, the complete recognition by the State of the duty of affording relief to the necessitous and deserving poor—a duty to be duly enforced by legal sanction, and comprised, like a tax, or the fulfilment of the laws relative to public hygiene, amongst the duties of citizenship. The principle upon which that duty is founded has received recognition by the establishment of Government hospitals where medical aid can be procured gratuitously by the victims of accident or illness ; but this is obviously a very short and halting step on the path of reform which I have endeavoured to trace. That the intervention of the State may operate methodically and

comprehensively, not arbitrarily and hesitatingly, the duty of relieving the poor must be recognized not as an act of compassion or philanthropy, the performance of which may be regarded as purely optional, but as a strict duty, a duty founded on right and on justice, the neglect of which is an injury to society.

Be it understood that I am far from desiring to discourage or limit private charity or benevolent institutions already existing, but I maintain that theoretically and from an economic standpoint (i.e., according to the rules of social science), no less than upon practical grounds, the State should assume the obligation of relieving the poor. In addition to other reasons, it should be borne in mind that a comprehensive and properly regulated system of poor relief would operate as a most puissant antidote to vice, disease—especially contagious and epidemic disease—and crime.

The above ideas are my own, founded upon personal experience and reflection. But I should greatly hesitate to put them forward were they not supported and reinforced by so high an authority as Professor Woolsey “An object which all modern States have kept in view,” writes that distinguished author, “has been to provide for the want of the poor and the helpless. The causes o

this unfortunate condition will of course greatly vary ; some are poor by their own vices ; others through their parents' fault ; others are incapacitated for work by disease or bodily deficiencies ; others by hard times and lack of employment. Some can be helped by family or friends ; others have no such source to look to. If the vicious poor are helped, they must not be put on the same level with the unfortunate poor, and it must be understood, in furnishing assistance, that the State does not take upon itself the burden that near kinsmen are able to bear.

“ Now, that in theory the State may provide for the wants of the poor may be argued from that common humanity which men chiefly cultivate in a community where social life is well ordered, and where men feel that they are not isolated, but members one of another. But independently of this feeling, which grows with civilization, the welfare of the State demands that a class which may be tempted to crime by want, and which ignorance renders comparatively useless to the State, should be kept down as much as possible. The chief problem is to prevent the vices and indigence of parents from reducing their children to degradation ; and hence the State's rights to provide education, moral

and religious instruction, and such a support as will save the poor from disease, all concur on their behalf. The State also, in some instances, is the only agent which can adequately deal with the great problem of poverty as it shows itself in large towns, and amid the rapid changes of demand for manufacturing products. Indeed, at all times there are wants which the benevolent cannot fully supply. If the relief of the destitute were left to them alone, it would be too great a burden for them, a minority of a people, to bear, not to say that multitudes of the better classes of the poor would not come within their knowledge.

“The method of supporting the poor without injury to the State, is a subject of extreme importance in a thickly populated and a manufacturing country, but does not concern us here. I remark on this point only that the able-bodied poor, if aided, ought to be furnished with supplies inferior to those which their own labour could procure, and that public charity ought to be so managed as not to extinguish private charity.”

With the introduction of an enlightened and comprehensive scheme of State Poor Relief, the existing arbitrary, ineffective and chaotic regulations relative to mendicancy

and vagabondage should be swept away and replaced by others founded upon the dictates of reason, humanity and experience. It were, however, I fear, chimerical to expect such a measure of reform from those at present responsible for Egypt's legislative output.



## XI

### OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS

**M**Y DEAR SIR,—

It will be conceded by any one who has thoughtfully observed the working of the administrative machine in Egypt, that in the case of each separate department there are glaring defects and shortcomings which urgently demand attention; but on this occasion it is proposed to deal with them in their totality. Let me commence this general scrutiny with the officials and the method of their appointment. How far in the selection of those who are to exercise responsibility in Egypt is the vital principle of actual competency and suitability carried out? The answer is discreditable to those who are accountable for the regulation of these appointments, and disheartening to the well-wishers of Egypt. A careful study of Lord Cromer's Report for 1904 will show facts that are absolutely startling, for they indicate a clear inability to grasp Egypt's requirements. The system there set forth is a mere subter-

fuge, seeing that only eight officials were selected in 1903, and twelve in 1904. The system herein dealt with was not applied to the twenty-five schoolmasters recently imported by Mr. Douglas Dunlop, nor to the two schoolmistresses, nor to the Professors of the School of Law for whom advertisements were inserted in the public press, offering them alluring salaries. Neither has it been applied to any of the European judges now on the Bench, nor to any of the highest functionaries. It may not, perhaps, be unreasonable to assume that appointments should be chiefly regulated by individual qualification for a post. But such a theory is evidently quite out of date. Qualification is a mere secondary matter, the credential which surpasses in importance all other claims being interest ! It is intensely to be deplored that such a statement can be fairly made, and that its accuracy is indisputable, as unfortunately is the case. Without this treacherous pass-key to preferment, this "Open Sesame" with its past history of corruption and its present record of maladministration, posts cannot be procured ; if procured, they could not be retained. It is the old menace to efficiency. The indictment is sweeping, but unluckily it can be supported by irrefragable evidence,

and the eventual effect on a country of a system which tends to, and which actually does, exclude the best men, is too patent to need any specific demonstration, for object lessons are abundant. With interest the way is open and promotion assured. It would be a mistake indeed to imagine that favouritism and protection are dead, that the abuses arising therefrom are things of the past, comfortable as the impression may be ; for the spirit of an unworthy system which in old days has brought *régimes* to moral bankruptcy and worse, still hangs like a brooding nightmare over the land of the lotus, and unhappily is apt to materialize when any especially important post falls vacant. Let the fact at least be recognized. No greater error could be made than the acceptance of the belief that impartiality and an unflinching attitude of single-minded concern, for principle rather than for person, take the uppermost seats at the board of control. These prime and necessary attributes may creep in by the back stairs if they get in at all ; their value is overlooked, and the choice of both native and European functionaries continues to be based on motives which are quite foreign to the necessities of the work involved, however comforting they may be.

to the individual applicant who takes care to stand on something else besides merit—through natural reticence and modesty, of course.

Nor can I acquit those at headquarters of gross partiality even when the posts are filled. Records prove that those who serve the English well obtain rapid advancement, whereas those who refuse to be time-servers are kept down, or by vexatious transfers from one part of the country to another worried out of the service. Such cases, of course, very rarely come to light, for the governmental method which produces them, relic as it is of times when corrupt dealings were the order of the day, is able to find support in the additional survival of a period of relative barbarism, namely, enforced silence. These cases are treated under all reserve, to borrow a phrase, while, moreover, Government employees are forbidden under pain of dismissal to communicate information to the newspapers. The virtue of silence is great, but there are occasions when the golden quality is the root of much evil, even to the compounding of flagitious injustice. The interesting prohibition which prevents the press from pillorying instances of bureaucratic tyranny extends even to boys and girls

attending Government schools. But, fortunately for the public weal, the scandal which is industriously kept under, even to the extent of threatening reprisals on school-children who imitate Lady Candour, spreads backwards and forwards and on either flank under the surface, and may be relied upon to come to the top some day, as matters of special moment will do, however efficient the means taken to prevent anything leaking out which touches what to the bureaucrat is doubtless esoteric policy. But when will the latter realize that good government fears nobody, having nothing to fear, and that the real secret of administrative success so far as internal control is concerned—since no question of foreign policy occurs here—is the courageous pursuit of a strong ideal, without favour, and therefore without fear of accruing scandal? Will the useful lesson ever be learned right through and acted upon? They were cognizant of its utility in the back ages of the world's history, but it has not been taken to heart yet. There is no necessity that there should be anything to leak out, no need to go to endless trouble in diplomatic caulking of exits, any more than there is to encourage hypocrisy in the high places by ostentatiously rewarding those who exhibit

a showy Anglophilism. It is true enough that the British public only sees one side of the medal and forms its opinions on Lord Cromer's speeches and Reports, the Reports of Sir William Garstin, and an interview given to a reporter now and then by Sir Rudolph Slatin. That is all. Why, the crimson flamingo floating over Egyptian waters is in a position to know as much about officialism and its secrets, to impart which is a privilege jealously denied even to schoolchildren !

The ideal of a government which should fitly represent a nation's dignity is remote indeed from all this pettiness and mean and gloomy detail. It is an overgrown routine which has forgotten its original purpose and been carried to the vanishing point of common sense. The manner in which officials are transferred from departments the working of which they know from experience to those of which they know nothing, is a veritable scandal, and worse—an exhibition of official flatfootedness and crass stupidity which calls for a drastic change. The matter was ventilated in the *Egyptian Gazette* of October, 1903, but the mismanagement still goes on unchecked, being evidently protected by the same agencies of muddle and crookedness which are always to the fore when the good

straight road of government is abandoned in favour of devious byways.

There is another source of weakness which I should desire to point out for your consideration. Each Government Administration has its "British Adviser," appointed nominally by the Egyptian Government, but actually, as a matter of fact, by the British Consul-General Lord Cromer, with whom he is always in touch. So far, so good ; at least it might be if the functions of this post were limited to the scope of its title ; but really the "Adviser" is not what his official designation indicates. He is the mouthpiece of his chief and the channel of communication between the administration to which he is attached and Lord Cromer, who is the autocratic dictator. Each "Adviser" receives £2,000 a year.

And now let me draw your attention to the plurality of offices. As if the above-mentioned emoluments were not adequate, Sir W. Garstin, Adviser to the Ministry of Public Works, Sir Vincent Corbett, Adviser to the Ministry of Finance, and Captain Lyons of the Survey Department, have just been appointed to the Board of State Railways. I presume these additional duties—for which their previous experience so pre-eminently

suits them—are not going to be discharged gratuitously. What their increase of salary is to be has not yet been publicly announced, and the likelihood is that it never will be, any more than will that of their eminent and equally qualified native colleagues. The Public Accounts just published in the *Journal Officiel* for the last six months are so arranged as not to disclose these important items. Surely, sir, while calling to your notice the above appointments and arrangements, which in my possibly weak judgment are not governed by profound wisdom, I might ask you to ponder upon Lord Edward Cecil's nomination to the Ministry of Finance at a salary of £2,000 a year, there being already at the same Ministry an "Adviser" and an Under Secretary—Mr. Mitchell Innes—in receipt of £1,500 a year. Lord Edward Cecil's qualification for the post appears to be that he previously held the offices of Agent-General for the Soudan and Under Secretary of State for the Egyptian War Office simultaneously.

And this brings me to my last and most serious cause of complaint, namely, the inequality of salaries paid to Government officials. I am speaking now entirely of those of Egyptian nationality.

By a decree of 1901, officials in Government

offices are for purposes of emolument divided into three classes :—

1. Those possessing the Primary Certificate of the Ministry of Public Instruction.

Salary £4, rising to £6, per month.

2. Those possessing the Secondary Certificate.

Salary £6 to £20.

3. Those possessing certificate of superior colleges, e.g. School of Law ; School of Agriculture ; School of Medicine.

Salary £12 and upwards.

But mark the injustice of the limitations so far as advancement is concerned. No employee, no matter what be his length of service, or however great his capacity, is permitted to pass from one class to another. The educational certificate is a bar, confining him to one groove, whereas the higher officials are appointed upon no such principle, or on any principle that I can discover, save that of interest, or knowledge on the part of the " Adviser " that he will fully serve the Government's purpose. Such a method may obtain the best men, but the chances are against it.

There are Governors of Provinces, natives, receiving £100 a month, who have been dispossessed—or rather, whose posts have been

so deprived—of every vestige of responsibility or real authority. They are not governors, but clerks, and as such their salaries might well be adjudged on the lower scale. Every order down to the most trivial and remote of matters is taken by them from the Ministry of the Interior.

Then we come to the native Ministers who receive £250 a month for carrying out the orders of their "Advisers." The disparity is excessive. Great responsibility may well have great reward, but of responsibility there is none. With profound respect I venture to lay the question before you whether it does not already appear to you that the payments in the upper grades are too high, and those in the lower grades too low?

The worthy upholding of judicial authority, the stand-by of all that is admirable in a nation's life, and the safeguarding of individual right, is the most important asset in civil existence. What do we find? There are judges who receive the magnificent emolument of £25 a month. It is trifling with a great position. How can any one look for the essential absolute integrity of purpose, vital indeed in such a case, from a Bench which has been wilfully placed in the humiliating position of relative poverty, and rendered

unable to support its rank in a proper fashion, more especially when one reflects that Egypt is still tainted by the ancient and accepted custom of baksheesh? How can it be expected to remain honest? I dare to say from years of knowledge that it is well known that it will not.

Promotion again is deplorably slow, and fitful caprice rules here. There are several degrees of judges, and as they rise from one grade to another there is not invariably an increase of salary. Sometimes the playthings of rank are deemed sufficient—a decoration—the title of “Bey.”

Again, there are individuals working as clerks, and who are therefore expected to dress like gentlemen and to be honest, who have been for half a century in the Service in receipt of not more than eight piastres, that is to say, two francs, a day, and who are—great is economy!—docked of this starvation pay by a meticulous authority on Fridays and other holidays when the Courts are closed, and this notwithstanding the rise in rents and cost of living, which have doubled during the last few years.

Is it not both cruel and absurd that an “effendi,” i.e. a gentleman (who is a functionary), should be paid at the rate of sixty francs

a month, whilst the servants, the ushers, the small fry, etc., of the tribunal are paid £E2, £E3, and £E4 a month ?

The salaries of officials attached to the Mohammedan ecclesiastical tribunals which possess exclusive jurisdiction in cases of marriage, divorce, wardship of minors and succession, where the parties are of Egyptian nationality, strikingly illustrate both the evils to which I have alluded, namely, inadequate remuneration amongst the lower grades and disparity between their salaries and those of functionaries on the higher rungs of the official ladder.

Commencing at the top, judges of the High Ecclesiastical Court receive from £E40 to £E50 per month, whilst in contrast with these, the judges of the inferior tribunals are paid no more than £E12 a month, and some as little as £E6 a month. Furthermore, ninety per cent. of the clerks of these Courts are in receipt of from £E3 to £E4 a month only. Nevertheless, to repeated petitions by those in the lower grades praying for an increase of pay, the Government has hitherto turned a deaf ear ; and although at the moment of writing it is announced that in the Budget for 1906 a sum of £E120,000 is allocated for increase of salaries, officials of the ecclesiastic-

tical courts are expressly excluded from participation, no increase in their case being contemplated, the object apparently being to leave these tribunals as a model of native corruption.

I take the liberty to say that the instances I have cited are a travesty of justice even on the threshold of the Courts, and a poor preparation indeed for fair dealing in the Chamber itself.

And yet, with facts such as these lying just below the surface, your people in England wonder that the curse of baksheesh should still exist in the land, notwithstanding the purifying influence exercised by the British authorities !

But the marvel really is that the curse is not twice as firmly established as is actually the case.



## XII

### A REQUIRED DEPARTMENT

**M**Y DEAR SIR,—

There are numerous matters concerned with the very life of Egypt which can be efficiently dealt with only by an Agricultural Department ; and the non-existence of a bureau able to cope with the many needs in connexion with the chief, if not the only, industry of the country forms one more disquieting example of a penny-wise and pound-foolish policy such as is the despair of the reformer. Egypt suffers from lack of direction in this respect, from, in short, the absence of a policy, while at the same time good energy is wasted and the country is harassed over affairs which do not touch any vital attribute of the national existence. That the labourer should participate in the growing opulence of the land should be recognized as an active principle, one never to be departed from, but kept sedulously in view in the operation of any one of the considerable changes which have influenced the finances

of the country ; while the responsibility for the fact that the man at the bottom, though bearing more than his share of the burden, does not so participate, rests surely with Government.

The question arises, how the latter is to face this problem, since it must be faced, and, with all difficulties, the sooner the better, for each month augments its magnitude. There are two ways. A system of progressive taxation may stand first ; and in the second place, the imposing of additional burdens on concessionaires. Would either step act as a check on legitimate enterprise ? Scarcely. The argument is about as old as the hills, but the truth of it is not nearly as obvious, for those individuals who are engaged in "enterprise" are not likely to leave Egypt alone, even if a slight percentage of the present enormous profits goes to the benefit of the worker, who, being a worker, is at present merely a pawn in the great main chance game of the "organizers" of huge profits and of the adepts at money-making expedients. It is decidedly not well that the Government should be merely the steward and caretaker of the interests of people to whom Egypt is but a chessboard, and who have no sympathy whatever with the destinies and future pros-

perity of the land. The matter is too big a one to be passed over lightly. No wonder the economist stumbles. One hears of miles of potential building land granted at the price of £E1 the feddan. Why did they not give it away at once, and have done with it ? Be it remembered that the ostensible purpose was for the laying out of a city close to the capital. It is asking for agitation now and in the future, when the full iniquity of the creation of this hotbed of improperly acquired vested interests will become glaringly apparent. And in this way too, the labourer whose interests are not looked after by a far-seeing Department of Agriculture is induced to come into the towns to inhabit houses run up by land speculators, while once in the towns the labourers will stop, no matter how insanitary their hovels, just in the same way as has occurred elsewhere. The trend is to the town, not to the country, and a distressing feature it is of the life of our day. Thus, so to speak, the urban money-maker, the small capitalist of yesterday, and the monopolist of to-morrow, is serving in Egypt to weaken the real power and resource of the nation ; for though his accounts show increase of wealth, though his transactions look well in bankers' clearing houses, yet is he the begetter

of poverty and the assailant of agriculture, which in Egypt before all is the intelligent foundation of the national life. Congestion in the towns—degeneracy of the race. But it is not only reasons such as these, potent as they are, that make for the need of a department which should attack with whole-hearted enthusiasm the menaces which surround the life of the son of the soil ; and one may well ask why if in another part of Africa thoroughly susceptible to British influence, namely, the Transvaal, an Agricultural Department, distinguished by keen initiative and the painstaking endeavour of Mr. F. B. Smith, has advanced the cause of farming and breeding, a similar institution could not be established in Egypt. But we need go no further afield than the Soudan to find a justification for our demands. There, on our very borders, exists a State Agricultural Department in full operation. Does it not seem strange, to use no harsher expression, that a province should have its agricultural needs considered before those of the parent land ? Such a department, if introduced into Egypt, could grapple with the question of the labourer's wage—the labourer who in Egypt apparently is not deemed worthy of his hire, for he receives in some districts as little as two piastres a day,

or fivepence in English money. How does he live on that? It is the natural query which comes. He does live on it, and hats off to the method of his life and to his disposal of the domestic budget; but as was said by an eminent Englishman thoroughly acquainted with them, "their condition is no better than that of *prædial slaves*"! In one district the wages of the farm labourers have been raised half a piastre a day, or a penny farthing, and great is the satisfaction at the advance. Far be it from me to say that the suggested Department for Agriculture could within the limits of a practical policy—and such only can be considered—remove at a stroke even some of the grosser disabilities which govern the hard-pressed workers' lives—the toilers from whom the utmost is expected, and who receive so little in return. The theory is as remote from realization as is a dream of the night from the glare of mid-day; but something might be done—something, say, to brighten the future for these, and to improve the present hour for workers who as representatives of a whole class were thankful enough for the addition of one half piastre to their daily wage, since it enabled them to buy a little salt. No commentary could touch the pathos of this. And this

leads one to the salt monopoly, now happily abolished, although one might well question the over-indulgent treatment of the concessionaire company. One may well feel surprise too, that although British influence has been supreme in Egypt for nearly a quarter of a century, no attempt was made to lessen the salt duty; and but for intelligent work from outside and a direct onslaught on a monopoly which exerted a malign influence on the labouring class, it is fair to assume that the abuse would have flourished for another score of years. All thanks, then, to those who organized this triumph. It is fitting here too that reference should be made to the confusion of administrative work, to which defect may be attributed in part the faulty system by which during the recent cattle plague some £17,000 had to be paid in the way of compensation for poisoning cattle by means of defective serum. It is easier to praise than to blame, but to the unprejudiced observer the scope for commendation seems slight in the case of a bureaucratic system which depicts the policy of muddle so exquisitely as in this case; and again in respect to the campaign against the cotton worm, which was entrusted to an Adviser, whose duties one might have thought lay in another direction.

But so it is in many quarters. An elaboration of routine, a system that manufactures slights and insults which cannot too thoroughly be condemned, and leaves undone work that is urgent to the last degree. Let there be no misunderstanding. There is no harm in officialism ; the mischief lies in the corrupting influence of indifference, the state of mind which is seemingly willing to accept as normal the scarcity of fodder which is causing untold suffering in the country. What would not an Agricultural Department have to say ?

Surely, too, in so far as concerns the general cry for reform in Egypt, the official theory is inexact which justifies a persistent hanging back in this respect—a marking time of a most deleterious description—on the plea that the mass of the population would prefer what is euphemistically termed “relatively slow progress.” We are told that the educated classes would not object to the raising of the revenue by increased national and local taxation, but that the masses would not understand. Specious and misleading. It is adroit, but will it serve ? The masses at the present rate of “relatively slow progress” will never then be enlightened as to their true requirements. Two piastres a day, and no education nor any means of getting it !

The argument is of the flat-footed variety, and deadly in its smugness. For what do we see? Reference has been made in earlier letters to the provision of superfluities out of taxation, but the masses—they can wait—till when? The policy which permits the catering for the requirements of the wealthy, to the exclusion from any participation in the benefits accruing therefrom of the entire wage-earning mass of the people, should be swept along with the other refuse of the day. There is call not for impatient innuendo or verbal pyrotechnics, but condemnation simple and severe, for the method of administration which consigns to the limbo of the things which may (or may not) be done to-morrow, the provision of shelter and sustenance for the afflicted, the aged, the waifs and strays, and which relegates to a future time any real attempt to deal with the ravages of drink and the spectre of infant mortality. Take these subjects in hand. The masses will soon then begin to exhibit the enlightenment the absence of which is the official excuse for leaving them as they are.

## XIII

### EDUCATION (I)

**M**Y DEAR SIR,—

That the proof of the excellence or otherwise of a system of education is to be found in the reception it enjoys among those most deeply concerned is a fact which can scarcely be gainsaid ; and it is in no captious spirit that attention is drawn to the meagre attendance at Government Schools in Egypt, which lack most assuredly in popularity and have failed to enlist the confidence of the people. What are the facts ? Be it remembered that we have a population of eleven millions ; yet the number attending the Government Schools, especially those devoted to technical subjects, is pitifully small, and taken in conjunction with the enormous expenditure, is evidence enough of the failure of the present system. As a matter of fact the curriculum and the system of tuition of the Government Primary and Secondary Schools satisfies neither the pupils, their parents, nor the teachers of Egyptian

nationality. Otherwise we should hear of more than 6,494 scholars in the Primary, and 1,033 in the Secondary Schools, out of eleven million inhabitants. No ; the only ones who are content with the existing condition of affairs are the large army of English professors, inspectors and administrators who prosper on large salaries and meagre employment. Vacations, to begin with, are inordinately long. In the next place, ninety-two per cent. of the Egyptian nation is Moslem, and the Government is (nominally) Moslem. Therefore the teaching of the Koran should be a salient feature of the curriculum. Is this so ? Unfortunately, no. The subject of religious instruction is neglected to a deplorable degree. In the Secondary Schools the Koran and the Moslem Religion are not taught at all. History again, which should be a base of knowledge, is treated as a mere enumeration of dates and events. Geography is reduced to the futile learning of unmeaning names and figures. In fact the English textbooks are deficient in all that important wider view—the ideals of good citizenship, and the devotion to culture for its own sake.

In this practical age, the study of Greek and Roman classics is, I hear, at a discount ; but the same cannot be said of Italian, modern

Greek, or German. Yet these languages, so serviceable in an international country like Egypt, form no part of the Government curriculum ; whilst even French, though still employed as an official channel of communication, has been banished from the prospectus of the Primary Schools. So much for Lord Cromer's boast about "linguistic Free Trade" !

The result of teaching nearly every subject in English is that the young Egyptian at the age of fourteen or fifteen speaks the language well. He is entirely without accent. Though his vocabulary may not be voluminous, because grammar is taught at the expense of composition, he can read and write English fluently. Indeed I have been told that his knowledge of English would put to shame many of the pupils educated by the Board Schools in England.

But at what cost does he acquire this proficiency ?

Those who know best inform me that everything else almost—and religion and the Arabic language most of all—is sacrificed to achieve this end.

Now this proficiency in English may be very flattering to the vanity of the Tutelary Power ; but is it fair, is it honest, to treat in

this fashion a foreign nation, whose country you occupy not by right of conquest, but simply because you have made yourselves masters there ?

The answer, the obvious official answer, is : Education is neither free nor compulsory. Parents need not send their children to Government schools, and in cases where they do, they have to pay for them and accept the curriculum that is laid down by the English authorities.

To this it may be rejoined that parents themselves are, for the most part, illiterate. They likewise have an abiding faith, which even the defective system of education in Government schools has not yet entirely destroyed, that the Government school provides the best means of qualifying for an official career ; and an official career is, for many of them, the badge of respectability. Hence parents flatter themselves that when their sons have acquired facility in English, a superficial acquaintance with geography, a smattering of the history of European States, and some knowledge of algebra and the like, they are educationally equipped for the battle of life ; or, what is more to the purpose, their offspring have a claim upon the Government for employment when their schooling is finished.

Certain it is that after the pupils have undergone a full course of training in Government schools they are suited for nothing else but Government employment.

Pupils who attend non-Government schools fare little better ; because non-Government schools, in order to prepare their scholars for examinations entitling them to the Government certificate, are compelled to adopt the curriculum of the Government schools.

Mr. Fitzroy Bell has sapiently remarked that there are many other walks in life besides that of a clerk ; but in Egypt education has come to mean merely this (and the poverty of the outlook is terrible) : fitting people to be clerks and nothing but clerks. The aim being apparently the production of clerks, the result is at present excellent. The land-owner chooses that his boy should be a salaried clerk rather than that he should increase the productivity of his country. If the State wants clerks let it continue its present system in Egypt. It will not fail to find them. But what will happen when, as is very likely to occur, the supply exceeds the demand ? Egypt will then be over-run by the prototype of that blight of modern India—the competition Wallah.

We do not want only clerks. We require

citizens and men. Let any dispassionate judge examine the syllabus of secondary education, and attend the classes in the schools, and ask himself what is there in the system and practice of instruction which fits youths to step into positions of trust and responsibility in national or municipal service, on railways, in banks, or in private establishments ? What opportunity is afforded them of becoming grounded in commercial questions ? None, absolutely none. All their training is directed to preparing them to be mere clerks or interpreters to their English superiors.

There are many defects in the system of instruction imparted in the higher Government colleges, but a discussion of these would involve technicalities which here would be out of place. Perhaps, however, the gravest defect of all, which runs through every grade of the educational system, is that relating to discipline.

There is an unreasoning but apparently ingrained and ineradicable notion amongst a certain class of Englishmen that severity is the only method of treating Eastern peoples, or, as they are pleased to call them, "subject races." Hence their educational methods are accompanied by a bullying brutality which

shocks and frightens those who require gentleness and kindly and sympathetic encouragement, and ends in the long run by producing in the victims callousness and disgust. This rudeness and overbearing manner is not confined to the treatment of pupils solely. It is applied with equal persistence to the teachers of Egyptian nationality. When an English inspector comes round into the class-rooms and finds a single exercise book uncorrected he sets to work to bully and furiously abuse the Egyptian teacher in the presence of the class. The demoralizing effect upon both teacher and class can be easily imagined.

- There are separate rooms allotted to British teachers and Egyptian teachers. They never associate.

You will wonder whether amongst the English teachers there have not been exceptions who revolted against the system above described. There have been, unluckily for themselves, such exceptions. They have speedily been cashiered as having been, to use the current phrase, "too friendly with the natives." Of course friendliness to the natives was not given as the official ground for shelving them. Some other more plausible excuse was found to conceal the true

reason of compulsory resignation. The authorities are adepts at special pleading.

It follows from what I have said above, that British teachers keep their pupils severely at a distance, and except for a game of football, are never to be found with them out of class hours. The pupils consequently never give their British teachers their confidence, nor are their lives influenced as they should be by those who impart instruction.

The Egyptian is very assimilative. He acquires with great rapidity the rough and brutal manner of his teachers, and he carries this ungentlemanly behaviour to his home, to the grief and despair of his parents. Indeed, the pupil educated at the Government schools is almost sure to treat his parents with disrespect.

From the foregoing observations you can readily understand that the profession of teaching is not popular amongst the Egyptians. The Normal School where they used to be trained has closed its doors for lack of students. Not alone that, but such is the paucity of certificated teachers in Government schools that it has been found necessary to fall back upon pupils who have only received a primary certificate to fill up gaps in the professional staff, notwithstanding the induce-

ments and pecuniary temptations held out to Egyptians to adopt a pedagogic career.

The faulty system of education initiated and maintained by the British authorities lies at the root of many of the defects in the Egyptian Administration. It cannot be alleged with an approximation to truth that the English during their twenty-three years of Occupation have effected anything to inspire the Egyptian people with a feeling of manliness or moral dignity, instilled into them a ring of patriotism, inaugurated the dawn of intellectual enlightenment, or impressed them with any strict and unflinching sense of duty.

A really scientific and at the same time practical education should not alone provide the methods best suited to equip the scholar for the battle of life—regarding which doctors are not yet entirely agreed—but what is still more essential is that it should take count of the different mental conditions of pupils, some of whom are suffering from diseases which render the pursuit of education especially difficult and arduous. In any large school will be found children and young persons suffering from epilepsy, hysteria and other kindred complaints which necessitate the individualization of education. It is obviously for the doctor to look after defects that are organic, but it

remains for the pedagogue to deal with mental deficiencies in order to bring back abnormal conditions to the normal. These of course require very strict and sustained supervision and very special treatment ; but science has made giant strides in recent years in this direction, and it is not too much to hope that in the near future much more may be learned. At all events, at the present stage, knowledge has advanced far enough to warrant the introduction of such methods into every school which counts itself in the vanguard of efficiency.

That the Egyptians are emotional and that they are governed by sentiment to an extent that the practical Englishman fails to understand, is a platitude that English writers and politicians are apt to overlook. The average Englishman, and in a greater degree the Anglo-Egyptian functionary, is inclined to "standardize" his qualities and to assume that divergence from them in another race is a badge of inferiority. That peculiarity is strongly in evidence wherever the Englishman is known, but it is especially pronounced in Egypt, where he has a free hand to train the natives according to his will.

The Egyptian question regarded from an internal and national point of view is, in its

most difficult and most important aspects, the problem of the Egyptian mind ; and the solution of this problem is to be found in the strengthening of Egyptian character. The strengthening of Egyptian character, I must repeat, is the foundation of all Egyptian progress. The problem is how to make headway in view of the weakness of character to which must be attributed in great measure the paralysis of the nation's activities in the past. That the Egyptian is remarkable for his quick intelligence, for his versatility, and, what is still more remarkable in an Eastern people, for his enthusiasm, no impartial critic has ever denied ; but, unfortunately, these admirable qualities are accompanied by a lack of moral courage, initiative, and self-reliance. Great as the "transformation" may have been, it is to be feared that the marvellous change may not be permanent, for lack of energy and will-power to sustain it. The character of the race is an affair of centuries, and it will take more than a couple of decades to reform and develop it.

It is by education and experience rather than by any sudden "transformation" that the defects in the Egyptian character will be slowly and gradually removed.



## XIV

### EDUCATION (II)

MY DEAR SIR,—

There is one leading principle—the principle of education—in the development of nations, the vital importance of which has been recognized by all those admirable thinkers and workers for human advantage whose words echo back to us out of the twilight of the past ; and it comes nowadays as a matter of surprise that the recognition of this cardinal necessity, namely, the education of a people, is in many quarters tardy and only partial, and in others *nil*. I regard the education of the Egyptian people as of such supreme necessity that in its early stages, at all events, equal opportunity should be afforded the nation at large of reaping its benefits ; and that this state of things may come to pass, it is absolutely necessary that every facility for elementary education should be offered by the State. Lord Cromer's dictum is, we know, that a system of low taxation

is the keystone to the political arch, and the theory has much to recommend it ; but as applied to elementary education it is a penny-wise and pound-foolish policy. A nation must be given the power and opportunity to realize itself, for without that realization the ethics of national progress are allowed to slip into oblivion, in favour of a system of administration on an artificial basis, since those who should rightly be participants in the benefits accruing from every step in advance, are relegated to the cold shadow tenanted by abstractions—mere puppets in a game played by and for the benefit of others. The people are not educated, they say, and therefore cannot understand these things. It is a complacent argument. But whose fault is it that they are not educated ? 'Not, as things stand, their own. It may be at once conceded that one of the most striking effects in the financial system inaugurated and pursued by the British authorities is that the poor are not permitted to share in a sufficient degree in the advancing prosperity of the country. Now, mutuality in a system of government should be an important constituent. It is a safeguard against innumerable dangers, an inestimable guarantee. Let me make my meaning clear, sir. I do not

pretend to say that more people are not employed, but what I do maintain is that the rate of pay is grossly inadequate, and that it will remain so unless the hard facts of the worker's lot are boldly faced. In Egypt, as in other parts of the world, every one is in such a hurry to be rich that no attention is paid to the just claims of the Egyptian labourer. In time to come doubtless labour unions will regulate the situation, but why not intelligently anticipate and better any operation of these somewhat doubtful agencies? The future is easy to talk about, but it is a long way off, and events call for action now. Egypt is advancing. True, but the mellowing influence of better times should not be the monopoly of the capitalist classes. Yet such is unhappily the case.

Fortunately there was never an evil without its attendant remedy. The manifest injustice to which I refer would to a great extent be mitigated by a properly graduated system of taxation whereby adequate provision should be made for universal elementary education. There is no more time to be lost. Not a turf has been turned, not a brick laid yet, of the fabric of national instruction. Of the latter the vast mass of the population does not possess even the rudiments. No one who is

acquainted with Egypt will venture to gainsay that fact. Indeed, the amount of education imparted in proportion to the bulk of the population is absolutely infinitesimal. This is a blot which a full recognition of the principle that elementary education should be universal will alone remove. Is there to be further damaging procrastination in such a case as this? The observer stands amazed at this neglect to deal in any adequate way with a question in which is bound up the future welfare of the country. It appears to have been regarded as one of those matters susceptible of indefinite postponement, while even the educational system as it stands is marked by many grotesque details of fettering fussiness of management which curtail its good effect, cripple the initiative of the hard-working professors, and tend finally to discourage the spirit of loyal endeavour which, whatever may be said to the contrary, is the distinguishing characteristic of the patient, toiling, native teacher. He does his part, and it is regrettable in the extreme that his sphere of useful work is, through that indifference at headquarters, so limited.

It will be the dawning of a brighter day for Egypt when the real effort is made to give

to all its children that groundwork of knowledge which is the right of every one. Too much water has swept down the Nile, too many years have slipped by since the days of war, for the inactivity in this direction to be excusable. There have been years of thought, of marking time, years of plenty, when there was abundant opportunity to take full account of that which was most urgent in the direction of reform. Steps might have been taken. Nobody would have accused those who took them of too much zeal. But efficiency in this respect does not seem to have been regarded as necessary. Perhaps it was thought that there was plenty of time. In this people were mistaken. The young generation grows up and starts life, and it has a real grievance. Has discernment gone for a holiday, or has the germ of the insidious "mañana" complaint of Spain crept in? Let it be impressed once for all on those who might act but who only think, that this is no counsel of perfection, no soaring piece of idealism, but a plain straightforward possibility. Many hundreds of years ago the necessity of a widespread system of education was recognized. Attempts were made then to supply the need, not always successful, perhaps, but an attempt is something after all, being honourable and worthy of

emulation. But there were insuperable difficulties in the way in old days, impediments which are not now in existence, to hamper the efforts of the educational reformer, or rather, the educational initiator, in Egypt. Difficulties can be raised, of course—the scaffolding of obstruction can be erected anywhere, against anything whatever under the great sun. There is the cost. That, however, is not a real deterrent. Only a bold move is required. Will it not be made? Egypt is waiting.

One is glad in this connexion to turn to Talleyrand, whose superlative diplomatic and social qualities seem to have obscured to ordinary students his unquestionable merits as an educational reformer—the world is so grudging of its honours. He concéived and elaborated a scheme in the forefront of which this profound dealer in statecraft laid down the axiom that—“ *La seule instruction que la Société doive avec la plus entière gratuité est celle qui est essentiellement commune à tous parcequ'elle est nécessaire à tous.* ”

Elementary education is strictly and essentially requisite for all, since it should comprise the factors of that which is indispensable, whatever walk in life may be selected.

I propose here, sir, to point out how the

change might be effected ; in what manner the dictum of Talleyrand could be rendered a brilliant actuality. One would like to know that the strong spirit of reform which has done much for Egypt, though not enough, was being directed to this matter, so that the ruling of the celebrated French Minister, who represented an age when there was time for everything, could be rendered once and for all operative here. If in these days, as some hold, these times of change and stress of life, we have lost the quality of repose, it is decidedly not the way to win it back to let valuable months and years slip by, resting on the oars while the eye contemplates with mistaken satisfaction the work that has already been accomplished. There is more work to be done, and the oars must dip again and again if the triumph is to be complete ; and no words can be too urgent in their significance, no argument too thorough, for the pushing on of this great task—the establishment of a system of sound elementary education throughout the length and breadth of the land. It can be done, and it is to be done ; and once the problem is seriously attacked the cloud of difficulty surrounding it will fade away.

And now, sir, as to the method. Education, as already pointed out, should be universal.

It should likewise be compulsory, as is the case in France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Belgium, to mention only some of the countries where the free and obligatory system prevails. Only in that way can the net draw in all the small factors referred to here.

In my country, as in many others, parents are often oblivious or neglectful of their duties towards their children—compelling them to perform laborious physical tasks, in order that they may thus contribute to the wages earned, when they ought to be at school—bringing them up without a particle of rudimentary instruction, and, in fact, treating them very much as if learning and its advantages did not exist. Account must be taken of such circumstances as these. For this shameful state of things compulsory education would operate as a powerful corrective. The additional expense and consequent increase of taxation is no doubt a formidable obstacle to be encountered ; but that consideration ought not to be allowed to stand in the way when the undeniable and immense advantage to the nation as a whole is taken fully into account. It is quite as essential as, if not more so than, military service, which in this country is compulsory.

There are, assuredly, no more practical and business-like people than the Americans. Let us see, then, what store they set by education. In his preface to the reports of the Educational Commission to the United States of America, October–December, 1903, Mr. Mosely, its originator, writes :—“Another point that struck me was the intense belief of the Americans in the education of the masses. They feel that their country cannot progress and prosper without it, and that if the people are to be raised, it must be done through the medium of education. Not only do they see in it a ‘moral policeman,’ but they argue that in the long run it is far more economical to educate the people than to support in the prisons, workhouses, etc., the unfortunates who through an inferior education, or none at all, have been left unfitted to earn their livelihood. It is felt indeed throughout the United States that education is their safety and salvation. . . .

“Further, from a purely business point of view, Americans see in the money spent on education a magnificent investment for their country.”

Why should not Egypt be allowed to profit by America’s experience?

Elementary education, when universally applied, is manifestly for the common good;

and its adoption should be regarded as of prime national importance. Under the system of taxation proposed, every one would be required to contribute according to his ability, and not according to the number of his children. The proposed system would work in this wise. The man of small means with three or four children would pay but for one and a half. The rich agriculturist or merchant with only one child would pay for three or four, or more. It is fair enough. The advantage is for all, and of that advantage, in the earlier years at any rate, full toll should be taken by all—advisedly all, if only out of respect for a communal system which would be a valuable resource for the country. But it may be objected that in this way married persons who are childless and those who are unmarried are equally called upon to contribute. It is true. But why not? Nothing could be more just, when once the principle is admitted that Society exists only by reason of the children that are born. There is too little prevision, too hap-hazard a regard for the days to come. Those who have offspring assure the continuation of the social system in which every one has an interest. Those who have them not incur thereby a debt to those who have; those who have few to those who have many.

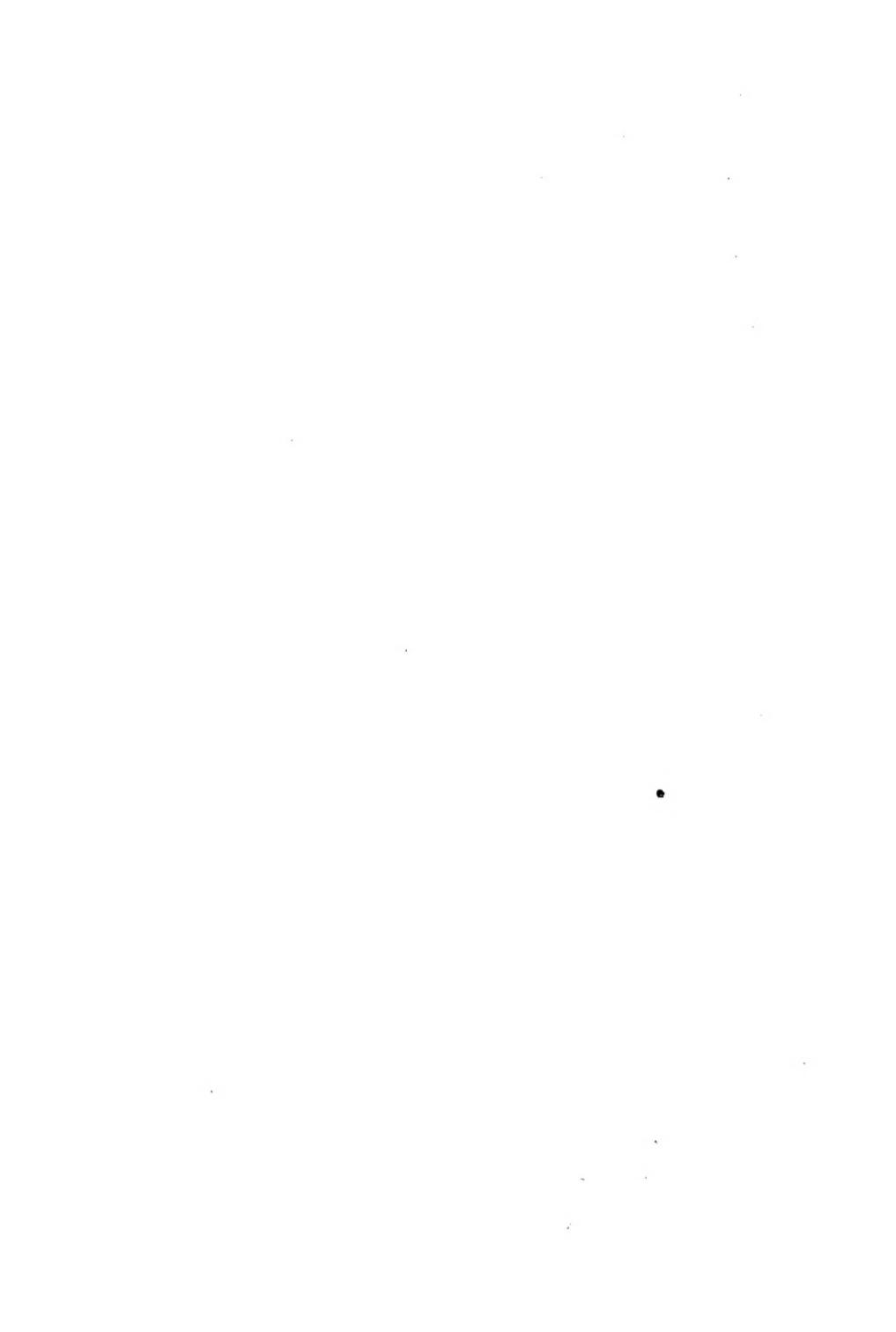
It will surely be found somewhere in the Book of Wisdom that those who do not contribute in kind to the perpetuation of the nation, should in equity bear a portion of the cost of filling up the gaps made by death and of providing renewed supplies of citizens ready to take the place of the invalid and aged. Once acknowledge the truth that education is a national concern, and it follows as a logical consequence that every representative of the nation should be called upon to contribute according to his ability.

Another markedly beneficial result which flows from a system of State-provided education is that it lightens the burden of parents who are willing to do their duty by their children. With them it is not a question whether they should pay for the education, but rather as to the manner in which the charge shall be levied. The school fees being paid out of the taxes, the parent is no longer called upon, during the period of his children's education, for the total cost thereof, but his payments are distributed over the whole period that he remains a tax-payer. The advantage to him in this respect is immense and indisputable. He is not harried at a period of life when the struggle is keenest. It is a system, as it were, of education assurance which is proposed.

His children immediately benefit, and he is allowed ample time to square the account. The cost of education presses heavily upon parents at the very moment when by reason of other expenses—the feeding and clothing of the family—they are least able to bear the burden. Under the present system such cost falls upon many when young, and before they have assured their position in life, whereas it is removed just at the moment when perhaps it could be the more easily sustained. Many, probably, would willingly accept an increase of taxation, even if in the end it amounted to more than they would otherwise expend, provided that the instalments were thus widely distributed.

The scheme here set forth is surely worthy of the closest and most impartial attention by those who could give effect to its provisions. It must be viewed as a wise and generous measure of relief for the Egyptian people, and as yet another important, if not the final, step in their emancipation. It is to be considered not alone for the present, but for the future. Carried out with an earnest regard for the characteristics of the people for whom it is intended, it should have the widest and most beneficial effect. Let it be remembered that it has ever been the professed aim of the

British authorities to weld on to Egyptian institutions the best that is to be found in Occidental method and thought, and that here more than in many cases is an opportunity for grafting on to the Oriental stem the priceless boon of the West—universal education. Again, by the failures of others can eventual success be attained. In England, enthusiasts and faddists have perhaps gone too far ; imposts are extravagant, and the ideal set up is one the pursuit of which has made those who see far ahead entertain grave misgivings. But the system suggested for Egypt is one which is peculiarly suited for the country's needs. The tax will be inappreciable, while, moreover, the aim is, and would remain, to impart an elementary education. That is all that the majority require : to force them to go further is waste of valuable time. But that those—the potentially erudite few—who are fitted by Nature to learn deeply should be supplied with the key to the door of knowledge, for them to open it and press on further if it is given to them so to do, is as beneficial to the country as that all the inheritors of the morrow should be equipped with the workaday rudiments of learning, the simple aids to life and to an appreciation of the world.



## XV

### CONCLUSION

**M**Y DEAR SIR,—

I have now arrived at the end of my thankless and uncongenial task. Believe me, I would infinitely have preferred throughout the series of letters that the language of eulogy should have preponderated rather than, as so far more frequently happened, expressions of condemnation. It has been my duty to deal with many matters in general terms only, leaving the details to be supplied subsequently, if ever I should be called upon for further explanations ; moreover, in my desire for conciseness, I have left untouched various departments of the Administration, such as the Customs, Ports and Lighthouses, Post Office, Prisons, Coastguards, etc., etc., most of which call for criticism not altogether favourable.

Several were the reasons which induced me to address these letters to an English Member of Parliament. Had I judged the British

nation from the vast majority of official specimens sent to this country, I would most assuredly have held my peace, for I could not have hoped that my remarks, and more particularly my strictures, would meet with anything but a contemptuous reception and an insolent rebuff. It has struck me quite as forcibly as it has impressed others that it is not the Egyptian alone that requires guidance. Those of British nationality also need direction along the road of unselfish duty and enlightened patriotism. They would in all probability take the right way if they could see it, but up to the present their vision is dim and circumscribed. They have imagined that in rendering Egypt materially opulent merely, they were fulfilling their responsible task, whereas in reality they were thereby demoralizing those they desired to benefit.

What, then, has it been that encouraged me to write these letters ? It was my two visits to London. It was these all too brief sojourns amongst the English people at the very centre where their life-blood throbs, and where from high and low, rich and poor, I received universal consideration and hospitality, having been treated as an honoured guest ; it was my acquaintance and association with my brethren of the Press, and especially with

members of the British House of Commons, that emboldened me to break the silence and appeal to that just and generous British nation for the redress of grievances, the reform of abuses, and above all for a more kindly and considerate treatment of a people who through force of circumstances have been placed under the British yoke, and claim therefore from the British the protection of their cherished and inalienable rights. Had I never visited England I should have despaired of making my voice heard beyond, perhaps, a very restricted circle of Europeans who were conversant with the Arabic language. But those visits to English homes in the country of the Tutelary Power gave me an amount of courage which, ever since, nothing could damp. I still firmly and sincerely believe that if only I can reach that heart of the English people, palpitating with human sympathy for the oppressed of every nationality, the cause will be gained, the long estrangement between Englishmen and Egyptians will cease, and they will mutually recognize that their interest lies in a true and enduring friendship.

I am of course not unmindful of the storm of protest with which some of the animadversions I have felt bound to make will be greeted

by those to whom they apply. I am quite prepared for all this, and for any amount of opposition and abuse that may have to be encountered. Judging from previous coincidences, it will in all probability be alleged against me, amongst other things, that I am the mouth-piece of the National Party that seeks to further its own ends—which are purely separatist—by vilifying the British authorities. To such a criticism I have but this answer to make. A party, nationalist or otherwise, must have some kind of organization and administrative machinery ; it must have leaders, committee, members, funds, places and times of meeting, etc. When all these things are absent, how can it truthfully be said that a party exists ? I take leave to say that there is no party, properly so called, that is, as it is understood in Europe, existing in Egypt.

Having made this frank avowal, it is to be hoped that it will not be turned against me by its being thought that I speak for myself—my own mind only. Such an inference would be absolutely erroneous. Let any one ask every second native Egyptian he meets, and he will find him echoing the views that have been here expressed.

Therefore I do not claim to speak for a party,

nor do I represent an interest merely sectional. I claim, on the contrary, to reflect the opinion of the Egyptian nation as a whole ; and it is on that solid and unshakable foundation that I take my stand, confident in the hope that the views I have put forward will find a ready response in the hearts of the British nation.

Some of the topics touched upon have had a political, others an administrative bearing ; and I will now venture to point out how it is that Egypt lags behind in these two branches of government.

First, as to the political situation. In a self-governed country, or in a healthy body politic, the Government and its subjects are one and interchangeable. They have their respective and correlative duties and rights. In a country governed by foreigners the rulers and the subjects are not one. But the aim of all true politicians ought to be to bring about this unity. The great gulf between the subjects and their rulers can be bridged only by bringing the former up to the level of the latter in intelligence, in culture, in moral calibre, in capacity for self-sacrifice, and in subordination to high ideals. The nearer the mass of subjects approach their rulers in these qualities, the easier the solution of the

political problem. The nearer you reach them, the smaller the number of those duties which, really belonging to the subjects, in the present state of society have to be performed by the State. In a perfect commonwealth the real sovereignty rests with the people. The State exists for them and rules in their name, and thus owns a smaller and more limited volume of rights than those vested in the so-called subjects. Hence, real political progress consists in preparing the nation to take up those duties which, though at present performed by the ruling class, ought in a state of political health to be discharged by the people themselves. The position thus analyzed resolves itself into an educational problem. View it from whatever point you choose, religious, moral, intellectual, social, or industrial, the question of Egypt's progress is a question of education. This is, so to speak, the question of questions, upon the right solution of which hang the destinies of the nation, viz.: how to educate the people so as to fit them for the performance of those duties, a proper discharge of which alone can secure for them their rightful position in the community of nations.

It is certainly safe to say that the governing class in Egypt has not yet approached the

problem of Egypt's destiny from the point of view above indicated.

And now, as regards the civil administration. To the impartial and painstaking observer who traces the influence of the system upon the individual through all grades of the service, and the consequent factor of efficiency that each individual contributes to the machine, it will become manifest as the light of the sun that it *is* a machine—a soulless piece of elaborate mechanism going by the clockwork of iron regulations, and from which the human element is rigidly discarded. Body and mind and soul are warped to one regulation pattern. The spirit of initiative is ruthlessly crushed, and the best workers are driven out of the service, though many of them began with enthusiastic dreams, and broke their hearts over the disillusion.

“Epochs arise,” said Lord Curzon, speaking in the city of London on July 21, 1904; “in the history of every country when the administrative machinery requires to be taken to pieces and overhauled and readjusted to the altered necessities of the hour. The engines are not working to their scheduled capacity, the engineers are perhaps slack. I agree with those who inscribe on their legislative banners the motto ‘Efficiency.’ But

my conception of efficiency is to practise as well as to preach it. It is with this object that we have conducted an inquiry in India into every branch of the Administration, beginning with the departments themselves, raising the conditions under which the officers of the Government worked, freeing them from the impediments of excessive routine and its consequences of strangulation of all initiative, and dilatoriness of action."

Such an inquiry is one of the principal requirements of present-day Egypt.

If there is one conclusion more than another which in recent years has gradually forced itself upon the minds of competent and unbiased critics, it is that the standard of administrative achievement in all spheres of Egyptian public affairs needs to be raised to a higher plane than it at present occupies. This conclusion may be drawn from the observation of the work of the chief branches of the national government, and receives convincing corroboration from annual and other reports, notwithstanding the painstaking efforts of their authors to minimize, excuse, or gloze over their own ineptitude and the defects and shortcomings of their several departments.

Now as regards the method in which the

inquiry into the Egyptian administration should be conducted, I venture to make a practical suggestion. The case seems to be clearly one where assistance should be sought outside the official fence. There is an admirable system, much more widely adopted by business firms in the United States of America than in Europe generally, by which expert business organizers are periodically called in to overhaul the organization of a business. It is recognized by the up-to-date men that the machinery for conducting their business must be subjected to a constant revision if they are to hold their own in competition with their rivals. They realize the need; but they also recognize that they themselves cannot undertake the task, partly because of lack of time, but mainly because they are too intimately associated with the management to be able to approach the matter with the necessary detachment of mind. The same observations apply with perhaps even greater force to their principal assistants, so they seek the necessary advice from outside experts, who devote weeks or months to a careful examination of the firm's existing arrangements, and then submit a report with practical suggestions for securing greater economy and efficiency. The principals are not necessarily

bound to adopt their suggestions, but in this way they secure themselves the opportunity of considering what are the weak spots in their organization, and of remedying them.

Is there not in this procedure an indication of the way in which the administrative machinery of Egypt might be overhauled? Why should not the British Government invite the assistance of a small committee of experts to inquire into the present system of administration and to make recommendations? The Committee need not be large, but the greatest care should be exercised in the selection of its members.

There is one final and parting word with which I would close these remarks. It has been and ever will be my persistent aim and highest ambition to foster sentiments of good-will and amity amongst Egyptians in relation to the English, for in my unalterable conviction, such relations cannot but be of mutual benefit. What I feel with poignant regret is that the Anglo-Egyptian administrator has not yet realized the advantages of adopting a conciliatory attitude towards the native, such as would be welcomed by the latter with unfeigned satisfaction. They, the Anglo-Egyptians, have still to show that they are capable of rising to larger concep-

tions of what may be done by a spirit of mutual sympathy and helpfulness between them and the nation they govern. Differences should be overcome by the honest endeavours of both sides to see how nearly it is possible to work together harmoniously. At present the disdainful indifference of the governing class is balanced only by the sullen dislike and mistrust of the governed. The rulers have still to be taught to recognize that their interests and those of the Egyptians are not irreconcilable, and that true progress can alone be ensured by perfect unity of aim. Had this policy been pursued in the past, many a difficulty would, without friction, have been surmounted, and not a few regrettable incidents, both constitutional and international, would have been prevented.

In conclusion, sir, let me add that if the remarks and suggestions which I have ventured to make should have the effect I so ardently desire of helping to correct the errors of the past, and bring about a better state of feeling between the two nations, the labour this self-imposed undertaking has entailed upon the writer will be more than amply rewarded.



